THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE

— BY —

JULIANA HORATIA EWING

AUTHOR OF JACKANAPES &c. &c.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON BROWNE

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1888.

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The story of a short life

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THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE.

"Do you know now when I am wheeling about in my chair, and playing with him and he looks at me wherever I go; sometimes for a bit I forget about the King, and I fancy he is sorry for me. Under the table was the only place where I could get out of the sight of his eyes."—*Frontispiece.*

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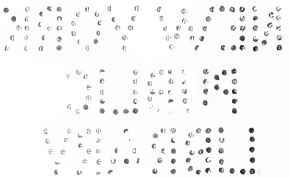
" But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorèd shears
And slits the thin spun life, — ' But not the praise.' "

Milton.

" It is a calumny on men to say that they are roused to heroic action by ease, hope of pleasure, recompense, — sugar-plums of any kind in this world or the next! In the meanest mortal there lies something nobler. . . . Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death are the *allurements* that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations. . . . Not by flattering our appetites; no, by awakening the Heroic that slumbers in every heart." — *Carlyle.*



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ASTOR LENOX AND
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CHAPTER I.

"Arma virumque cano." — *Æneid.*

"Man — and the horseradish — are most biting when grated." — *Jean Paul Richter.*

MOST annoying!" said the Master of the House. His thick eyebrows were puckered just then with the vexation of his thoughts; but the lines of annoyance on his forehead were to some extent fixed lines. They helped to make him look older than his age — he was not forty — and they gathered into a fierce frown as his elbow was softly touched by his little son.

The child was defiantly like his father, even to a knitted brow, for his whole face was crumpled with the vigor of some resolve which he found it hard to keep, and which was symbolized by his holding the little red tip of his tongue betwixt finger and thumb.

"Put your hands down, Leonard! Put your tongue in, sir! What are you after? What do you want? What are you doing here? Be off to the nursery, and tell Jemima to keep you there. Your mother and I are busy."

Far behind the boy, on the wall, hung the portrait of one of his ancestors — a youth of sixteen. The painting was by Vandyck, and it was the most valuable of the many valuable things that strewed and decorated the room. A very perfect example of the great master's work, and uninjured by Time. The young Cavalier's face was more interesting than handsome, but so eager and refined that, set off as it was by pale-hued satin and falling hair, he might have been called effeminate, if his brief life, which ended on the field of Naseby, had not done more than common to prove his manhood. A coat-of-arms, blazoned in the corner of the painting, had some appearance of having been added later. Below this was rudely inscribed, in yellow paint, the motto which also decorated the elaborate stone mantlepiece opposite — *Lætus sorte mea.*

Leonard was very fond of that picture. It was known to his childish affections as "Uncle Rupert."

He constantly wished that he could get into the frame and play with the dog — the dog with the upturned face and melancholy eyes, and odd resemblance to a long-haired Cavalier — on whose faithful head Uncle Rupert's slender fingers perpetually reposed.

Though not able to play with the dog, Leonard did play with Uncle Rupert — the game of trying to get out of the reach of his eyes.

"I play 'Puss-in-the-corner' with him," the child was wont to explain; "but whichever corner I get into, his eyes come after me. The dog looks at Uncle Rupert always, and Uncle Rupert always looks at me."

. . . . "To see if you are growing up a good boy and a gallant young gentleman, such as he was." So Leonard's parents and guardians explained the matter to him, and he devoutedly believed them.

Many an older and less credulous spectator stood in the light of those painted eyes, and acknowledged their spell. Very marvellous was the cunning which, by dabs and streaks of color, had kept the spirit of this long dead youth to gaze at his descendants from a sheet of canvas and stir the sympathy of strangers, parted by more than two centuries from his sorrows, with the mock melancholy of painted tears. For whether the painter had just overdone some trick of representing their liquidness, or whether the boy's eyes had brimmed over as he was standing for his portrait (his father and elder brother had died in the civil war before him), there remains no tradition to

tell. But Vandyck never painted a portrait fuller of sad dignity, even in those troubled times.

Happily for his elders, Leonard invented for himself a reason for the obvious tears.

"I believe Uncle Rupert knew that they were going to chop the poor king's head off, and that's why he looks as if he were going to cry."

It was partly because the child himself looked as if he were going to cry — and that not fractiously, but despite a struggle with himself — that, as he stood before the Master of the House, he might have been that other master of the same house come to life again at six years of age. His long, fair hair, the pliable, nervous fingers, which he had put down as he was bid, the strenuous tension of his little figure under a sense of injustice, and, above all, his beautiful eyes, in which the tears now brimmed over the eyelashes as the waters of a lake well up through the reeds that fringe its banks. He was very very like Uncle Rupert when he turned those eyes on his mother in mute reproach.

Lady Jane came to his defence.

"I think Leonard meant to be good. I made him promise me to try and cure himself of the habit of speaking to you when you are speaking to some one else. But, dear Leonard" (and she took the hand that had touched his father's elbow), "I don't think you were quite on honor when you interrupted Father with this hand, though you were holding your tongue with the other. That is what we

call keeping a promise to the ear and breaking it to the sense."

All the Cavalier dignity came unstarched in Leonard's figure. With a red face, he answered bluntly, "I'm very sorry. I meant to keep my promise."

"Next time keep it *well*, as a gentleman should. Now, what do you want?"

"Pencil and paper, please."

"There they are. Take them to the nursery, as Father told you."

Leonard looked at his father. He had not been spoilt for six years by an irritable and indulgent parent without learning those arts of diplomacy in which children quickly become experts.

"Oh, he can stay," said the Master of the House, "and he may say a word now and then, if he does n't talk too much. Boys can't sit mumchance always — can they, Len? There; kiss your poor old father, and get away, and keep quiet."

Lady Jane made one of many fruitless efforts on behalf of discipline.

"I think, dear, as you told him to go, he had better go now."

"He *will* go, pretty sharp, if he is n't good. Now, for pity's sake, let's talk out this affair, and let me get back to my work."

"Have you been writing poetry this morning Father dear?" Leonard inquired, urbanely.

He was now lolling against a writing-table of the first empire, where sheets of paper lay like fallen

leaves among Japanese bronzes, old and elaborate candlesticks, grotesque letter-clips and paper-weights, quaint pottery, big seals, and spring flowers in slender Venetian glasses of many colors.

"I wrote three lines, and was interrupted four times," replied his sire, with bitter brevity.

"I think *I'll* write some poetry. I don't mind being interrupted. May I have your ink?"

"No, you may *not!*" roared the Master of the House and of the inkpot of priceless china which Leonard had seized. "Now, be off to the nursery!"

"I won't touch anything. I am going to draw out of the window," said Leonard, calmly.

He had practised the art of being troublesome to the verge of expulsion ever since he had had a whim of his own, and as skilfully as he played other games. He was seated among the cushions of the oriel window-seat (colored rays from coats-of-arms in the upper panes falling on his fair hair with a fanciful effect of canonizing him for his sudden goodness) almost before his father could reply.

"I advise you to stay there, and to keep quiet." Lady Jane took up the broken thread of conversation in despair.

"Have you ever seen him?"

"Yes; years ago."

"You know I never saw either. Your sister was much older than you; was n't she?"

"*The shadows move so on the grass, and the elms*

have so many branches, I think I shall turn round and draw the fireplace," murmured Leonard.

"Ten years. You may be sure, if I had been grown up I should never have allowed the marriage. I cannot think what possessed my father —"

"I am doing the inscription! I can print Old English. What does L. diphthong Æ. T. U. S. mean?" said Leonard.

"*It means joyful, contented, happy.* — I was at Eton at the time. Disastrous ill-luck!"

"Are there any children?"

"One son. And to crown all, *his* regiment is at Asholt. Nice family party!"

"A young man! Has he been well brought up?"

"*What does* —"

"*Will you hold your tongue, Leonard?* — Is he likely to have been well brought up? However, he's 'in the Service,' as they say. I wish it did n't make one think of flunkies, what with the word service, and the liveries (I mean uniforms), and the legs, and shoulders, and swagger, and tag-rags, and epaulettes, and the fatiguing alertness and attentiveness of 'men in the Service.'"

The Master of the House spoke with the pettish accent of one who says what he does not mean, partly for lack of something better to do, and partly to avenge some inward vexation upon his hearers. He lounged languidly on a couch, but Lady Jane sat upright, and her eyes gave an unwonted flash. She came of an ancient Scottish race, that had shed its

blood like water on many a battle-field, generations before the family of her English husband had become favorites at the Court of the Tudors.

"I have so many military belongings, both in the past and the present, that I have a respect for the Service — "

He got up, and patted her head, and smiled.

"I beg your pardon, my child. Et ego — " and he looked at Uncle Rupert, who looked sadly back again: "but you must make allowances for me. Asholt Camp has been a thorn in my side from the first. And now to have the barrack-master, and the youngest subaltern of a marching regiment — "

"He's our nephew, Rupert!"

"Mine — not yours. You've nothing to do with him, thank goodness."

"Your people are my people. Now do not worry yourself. *Of course* I shall call on your sister at once. Will they be here for some time?"

"Five years, you may depend. He's just the sort of man to wedge himself into a snug berth at Asholt. You're an angel, Jane; you always are. But fighting ancestors are one thing, a barrack-master brother-in-law is another."

"Has he done any fighting?"

"Oh dear, yes! Bemedalled like that Guy Fawkes General in the pawnbroker's window, that Len was so charmed by. But, my dear, I assure you — "

"*I only just want to know what S. O. R. T. E. M. E. A. means*," *Leonard hastily broke in.* "*I've*

done it all now, and sha'n't want to know anything more."

"*Sorte mea is Latin for My fate, or My lot in life. Lætus sorte mea means Happy in my lot. It is our family motto. Now, if you ask another question, off you go!* — After all, Jane, you must allow it's about as hard lines as could be, to have a few ancestral acres and a nice old place in one of the quietest, quaintest corners of Old England; and for Government to come and plant a Camp of Instruction, as they call it, and pour in tribes of savages in war-paint to build wigwams within a couple of miles of your lodge-gates!"

She laughed heartily.

"Dear Rupert! You *are* a born poet! You do magnify your woes so grandly. What was the brother-in-law like when you saw him?"

"Oh, the regular type. Hair cut like a pauper, or a convict" (the Master of the House tossed his own locks as he spoke), "big, swaggering sort of fellow, swallowed the poker and not digested it, rather good features, acclimatized complexion, tight fit of hot-red cloth, and general pipeclay."

"*Then he must be the Sapper!*" Leonard announced, as he advanced with a firm step and kindling eyes from the window. "Jemima's *other* brother is a Gunner. *He* dresses in blue. But they both pipeclay their gloves, and I pipeclayed mine this morning, when she did the hearth. You've no idea how nasty they look whilst it's wet, but they dry as white

as snow, only mine fell among the cinders. The Sapper is very kind, both to her and to me He gave her a brooch, and he is making me a wooden fort to put my cannon in. But the Gunner is such a funny man! I said to him, 'Gunner! why do you wear white gloves?' and he said, 'Young gentleman, why does a miller wear a white hat?' He's very funny. But I think I like the tidy one best of all. He is so very beautiful, and I should think he must be very brave."

That Leonard was permitted to deliver himself of this speech without a check can only have been due to the paralyzing nature of the shock which it inflicted on his parents, and of which he himself was pleasantly unconscious. His whole soul was in the subject, and he spoke with a certain grace and directness of address, and with a clear and facile enunciation, which were among the child's most conspicuous marks of good breeding.

"This is nice!" said the Master of the House between his teeth with a deepened scowl.

The air felt stormy, and Leonard began to coax. He laid his curls against his father's arm, and asked, "Did you ever see a *tidy one*, Father dear? He *is* a very splendid sort of man."

"What nonsense are you talking? What do you mean by a *tidy one?*"

There was no mistake about the storm now; and Leonard began to feel helpless, and, as usual in such circumstances, turned to Lady Jane.

"Mother told me!" he gasped.

The Master of the House also turned to Lady Jane.

"Do you mean you have heard of this before?"

She shook her head, and he seized his son by the shoulder.

"If that woman has taught you to tell untruths —"

Lady Jane firmly interposed.

"Leonard never tells untruths, Rupert. Please don't frighten him into doing so. Now, Leonard, don't be foolish and cowardly. Tell Mother quite bravely all about it. Perhaps she has forgotten."

The child was naturally brave; but the elements of excitement and uncertainty in his up-bringing were producing their natural results in a nervous and unequable temperament. It is not the least serious of the evils of being "spoilt," though, perhaps, the most seldom recognized. Many a fond parent justly fears to overdo "lessons," who is surprisingly blind to the brain-fag that comes from the strain to live at grown-up people's level; and to the nervous exhaustion produced in children, no less than in their elders, by indulged restlessness, discontent, and craving for fresh excitement, and for want of that sense of power and repose which comes with habitual obedience to righteous rules and regulations. Laws that can be set at nought are among the most demoralizing of influences which can curse a nation; and their effects are hardly less disastrous in the nursery. Moreover, an uncertain discipline is apt to take even the spoilt by surprise: and as Leonard seldom fully understood

the checks he did receive, they unnerved him. He was unnerved now; and, even with his hand in that of his mother, he stammered over his story with ill-repressed sobs and much mental confusion.

"W — we met him out walking. I m — mean we were out walking. He was out riding. He looked like a picture in my t — t — tales from Froissart. He had a very curious kind of a helmet — n — not quite a helmet, and a beautiful green feather — at least, n — not exactly a feather and a beautiful red waistcoat, only n — not a real waistcoat, b — but — "

"Send him to bed!" roared the Master of the House. "Don't let him prevaricate any more!"

"No, Rupert, please! I wish him to try and give a straight account. Now, Leonard, don't be a baby; but go on and tell the truth, like a brave boy."

Leonard desperately proceeded, sniffing as he did so.

"He c — carried a spear, like an old warrior. He truthfully did. On my honor! One end was on the tip of his foot, and there was a flag at the other end — a real fluttering pennon — there truthfully was! He does poke with his spear in battle, I do believe; but he did n't poke us. He was b — b — beautiful to b — b — be — hold! I asked Jemima, 'Is he another brother, for you do have such very nice brothers?' and she said, 'No, he's — '"

"*Hang* Jemima!" said the Master of the House. "Now listen to me. You said your mother told you. *What* did she tell you?"

"Je — Je — Jemima said, 'No, he's a' Orderly;' and asked the way — I qu — quite forget where to — I truthfully do. And next morning I asked Mother what does Orderly mean? And she said *tidy*. So I call him the tidy one. Dear Mother, you truthfully did — at least," added Leonard chivalrously, as Lady Jane's face gave no response, "at least, if you've forgotten, never mind: it's my fault."

But Lady Jane's face was blank because she was trying not to laugh. The Master of the House did not try long. He bit his lip, and then burst into a peal.

"Better say no more to him," murmured Lady Jane. "I'll see Jemima now, if he may stay with you."

He nodded, and throwing himself back on the couch, held out his arms to the child.

"Well, that'll do. Put these men out of your head, and let me see your drawing."

Leonard stretched his faculties, and perceived that the storm was overpast. He clambered on to his father's knee, and their heads were soon bent lovingly together over the much-smudged sheet of paper, on which the motto from the chimney-piece was irregularly traced.

"You should have copied it from Uncle Rupert's picture. It is in plain letters there."

Leonard made no reply. His head now lay back on his father's shoulder, and his eyes were fixed on the ceiling, which was of Elizabethan date, with fantastic flowers in raised plaster-work. But Leonard

did not see them at that moment. His vision was really turned inwards. Presently he said, "I am trying to think. Don't interrupt me, Father, if you please."

The Master of the House smiled, and gazed complacently at the face beside him. No painting, no china in his possession, was more beautiful. Suddenly the boy jumped down and stood alone, with his hands behind his back, and his eyes tightly shut.

"I am thinking very hard, Father. Please tell me again what our motto means."

"'*Lætus sorte mea*, — Happy in my lot.' What *are* you puzzling your little brains about?"

"Because I know I know something so like it, and I can't think what! Yes — no! Wait a minute! I've just got it! Yes, I remember now: it was my Wednesday text!"

He opened wide shining eyes, and clapped his hands, and his clear voice rang with the added note of triumph, as he cried, "'The *lot* is fallen unto me in a fair ground. Yea, I have a goodly heritage.'"

The Master of the House held out his arms without speaking; but when Leonard had climbed back into them, he stroked the child's hair slowly, and said, "Is that your Wednesday text?"

"Last Wednesday's. I learn a text every day. Jemima sets them. She says her grandmother made her learn texts when she was a little girl. Now, Father dear, I'll tell you what I wish you would do: and I want you to do it at once — this very minute."

"That is generally the date of your desires. What is it?"

"I don't know what you are talking about, but I know what I want. Now you and I are all alone to our very selves, I want you to come to the organ, and put that text to music like the anthem you made out of those texts Mother chose for you, for the harvest festival. I'll tell you the words, for fear you don't quite remember them, and I'll blow the bellows. You may play on all-fours with both your feet and hands; you may pull out trumpet handle; you may make as much noise as ever you like — you'll see how I'll blow!"

. . . . . .

Satisfied by the sounds of music that the two were happy, Lady Jane was in no haste to go back to the library; but when she did return, Leonard greeted her warmly.

He was pumping at the bellows handle of the chamber organ, before which sat the Master of the House, not a ruffle on his brow, playing with "all-fours," and singing as he played.

Leonard's cheeks were flushed, and he cried impatiently, —

"Mother! Mother dear! I've been wanting you ever so long! Father has set my text to music, and I want you to hear it; but I want to sit by him and sing too. So you must come and blow."

"Nonsense, Leonard! Your mother must do nothing of the sort. Jane! listen to this! — *In a fa—air*

grou — nd. Bit of pure melody, that, eh? The land flowing with milk and honey seems to stretch before one's eyes — "

"No! Father, that *is* unfair. You are not to tell her bits in the middle. Begin at the beginning, and — Mother dear, will you blow, and let me sing?"

"Certainly. Yes, Rupert, please. I've done it before; and my back is n't aching to-day. Do let me!"

"Yes, do let her," said Leonard, conclusively; and he swung himself up into the seat beside his father without more ado.

"Now, Father, begin! Mother, listen! And when it comes to '*Yea*,' and I pull trumpet handle out, blow as hard as ever you can. This first bit — when he only plays — is very gentle, and quite easy to blow."

Deep breathing of the organ filled a brief silence, then a prelude stole about the room. Leonard's eyes devoured his father's face, and the Master of the House looking down on him, with the double complacency of father and composer, began to sing:

"'The lot — the lot is fallen un-to me;'" and, his mouth wide-parted with smiles, Leonard sang also: "'The lot — the lot is fallen — fallen unto me.

"'In a fa—air grou—nd.

"'Yea! (Now, Mother dear, blow! and fancy you hear trumpets!)

"'*Yea!* YEA! I have a good-ly Her—i—tage!'"

And after Lady Jane had ceased to blow, and the

musician to make music, Leonard still danced and sang wildly about the room.

"Is n't it splendid, Mother? Father and I made it together out of my Wednesday text. Uncle Rupert, can *you* hear it? I don't think you can. I believe you are dead and deaf, though you seem to see."

And standing face to face with the young Cavalier, Leonard sang his Wednesday text all through:

"'The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'"

But Uncle Rupert spoke no word to his young kinsman, though he still "seemed to see" through eyes drowned in tears.

CHAPTER II.

— "an acre of barren ground; ling, heath, broom, furze, anything."
Tempest, Act i. Scene 1

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."
Scott.

TAKE a Highwayman's Heath.

Destroy every vestige of life with fire and axe, from the pine that has longest been a landmark, to the smallest beetle smothered in smoking moss.

Burn acres of purple and pink heather, and pare away the young bracken that springs verdant from its ashes.

Let flame consume the perfumed gorse in all its glory, and not spare the broom, whose more exquisite yellow atones for its lack of fragrance.

In this common ruin be every lesser flower involved: blue beds of speedwell by the wayfarer's path — the daintier milkwort, and rougher red rattle — down to the very dodder that clasps the heather, let them perish, and the face of Dame Nature be utterly blackened! Then:

Shave the heath as bare as the back of your hand, and if you have felled every tree, and left not so much as a tussock of grass or a scarlet toadstool to break the force of the winds; then shall the winds come, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall raise on your shaven heath clouds of sand that would not discredit a desert in the heart of Africa.

By some such recipe the ground was prepared for that Camp of Instruction at Asholt which was, as we have seen, a thorn in the side of at least one of its neighbors. Then a due portion of this sandy oasis in a wilderness of beauty was mapped out into lines, with military precision, and on these were built rows of little wooden huts, which were painted a neat and useful black.

The huts for married men and officers were of varying degrees of comfort and homeliness, but those for single men were like toy-boxes of wooden soldiers; it was only by doing it very tidily that you could (so to speak) put your pretty soldiers away at night when

you had done playing with them, and get the lid to shut down.

But then tidiness is a virtue which — like Patience — is its own reward. And nineteen men who keep themselves clean and their belongings cleaner; who have made their nineteen beds into easy chairs before most people have got out of bed at all; whose tin pails are kept as bright as average teaspoons (to the envy of housewives and the shame of housemaids!); who establish a common and a holiday side to the reversible top of their one long table, and scrupulously scrub both; who have a place for everything and a discipline which obliges everybody to put everything in its place; — nineteen men, I say, with such habits, find more comfort and elbow-room in a hut than an outsider might believe possible, and hang up a photo graph or two into the bargain.

But it may be at once conceded to the credit of the camp, that those who lived there thought better of it than those who did not, and that those who lived there longest were apt to like it best of all.

It was, however, regarded by different people from very opposite points of view, in each of which was some truth.

There were those to whom the place and the life were alike hateful.

They said that, from a soldier's stand-point, the life was one of exceptionally hard work, and uncertain stay, with no small proportion of the hardships and

even risks of active service, and none of the more glorious chances of war.

That you might die of sunstroke on the march, or contract rheumatism, fever, or dysentery, under canvas, without drawing Indian pay and allowances; and that you might ruin your uniform as rapidly as in a campaign, and never hope to pin a ribbon over its inglorious stains.

That the military society was too large to find friends quickly in the neighborhood, and that as to your neighbors in camp, they were sure to get marching orders just when you had learnt to like them. And if you did *not* like them —! (But for that matter, quarrelsome neighbors are much the same everywhere. And a boundary road between two estates will furnish as pretty a feud as the pump of a common back-yard.)

The haters of the camp said that it had every characteristic to disqualify it for a home; that it was ugly and crowded without the appliances of civilization; that it was neither town nor country, and had the disadvantages of each without the merits of either.

That it was unshaded and unsheltered, that the lines were monotonous and yet confusing, and every road and parade-ground more dusty than another.

That the huts let in the frost in winter and the heat in summer, and were at once stuffy and draughty.

That the low roofs were like a weight upon your head, and that the torture was invariably brought to a climax on the hottest of the dog-days, when they

were tarred and sanded in spite of your teeth; a process which did not insure their being water-tight or snow-proof when the weather changed.

That the rooms had no cupboards, but an unusual number of doors, through which no tall man could pass without stooping.

That only the publicity and squalor of the back-premises of the "Lines" — their drying clothes, and crumbling mud walls, their coal-boxes and slop-pails — could exceed the depressing effects of the gardens in front, where such plants as were not uprooted by the winds perished of frost or drought, and where, if some gallant creeper had stood fast and covered the nakedness of your wooden hovel, the Royal Engineers would arrive one morning, with as little announcement as the tar and sand men, and tear down the growth of years before you had finished shaving, for the purpose of repainting your outer walls.

On the other hand, there were those who had a great affection for Asholt, and affection never lacks arguments.

Admitting some hardships and blunders, the defenders of the Camp fell back successfully upon statistics for a witness to the general good health.

They said that if the Camp was windy the breezes were exquisitely bracing, and the climate of that particular part of England such as would qualify it for a health-resort for invalids, were it only situated in a comparatively inaccessible part of the Pyrenees, instead of being within an hour or two of London.

That this fact of being within easy reach of town made the Camp practically at the head-quarters of civilization and refinement, whilst the simple and sociable ways of living, necessitated by hut-life in common, emancipated its select society from rival extravagance and cumbersome formalities.

That the Camp stood on the borders of the two counties of England which rank highest on the books of estate and house-agents, and that if you did not think the country lovely and the neighborhood agreeable you must be hard to please.

That, as regards the Royal Engineers, it was one of your privileges to be hard to please, since you were entitled to their good offices; and if, after all, they sometimes failed to cure your disordered drains and smoky chimneys, you, at any rate, did not pay as well as suffer, which is the case in civil life.

That low doors to military quarters might be regarded as a practical joke on the part of authorities, who demand that soldiers shall be both tall and upright, but that man, whether military or not, is an adaptable animal and can get used to anything; and indeed it was only those officers whose thoughts were more active than their instincts who invariably crushed their best hats before starting for town.

That huts (if only they were a little higher!) had a great many advantages over small houses, which were best appreciated by those who had tried drawing lodging allowance and living in villas, and which would be fully known if ever the Lines were rebuilt in brick.

That on moonlit nights the airs that fanned the silent Camp were as dry and wholesome as by day; that the song of the distant nightingale could be heard there; and finally, that from end to end of this dwelling-place of ten thousand to (on occasion) twenty thousand men, a woman might pass at midnight with greater safety than in the country lanes of a rural village or a police-protected thoroughfare of the metropolis.

But, in truth, the Camp's best defence in the hearts of its defenders was that it was a camp, — military life in epitome, with all its defects and all its charm; not the least of which, to some whimsical minds, is, that it represents, as no other phase of society represents, the human pilgrimage in brief.

Here be sudden partings, but frequent reunions; the charities and courtesies of an uncertain life lived largely in common; the hospitality of passing hosts to guests who tarry but a day.

Here, surely, should be the home of the sage as well as the soldier, where every hut might fitly carry the ancient motto, "Dwell as if about to Depart," where work bears the nobler name of duty, and where the living, hastening on his business amid "the hurryings of this life,"[1] must pause and stand to salute the dead as he is carried by.

Bare and dusty are the Parade Grounds, but they are thick with memories. Here were blessed the colors that became a young man's shroud that they

[1] Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

might not be a nation's shame. Here march and music welcome the coming and speed the parting regiments. On this Parade the rising sun is greeted with gun-fire and trumpet clarions shriller than the cock, and there he sets to a like salute with tuck of drum. Here the young recruit drills, the warrior puts on his medal, the old pensioner steals back to watch them, and the soldiers' children play — sometimes at fighting or flag-wagging,[1] but oftener at funerals!

[1] "Flag-wagging," a name among soldiers' children for "signalling."

CHAPTER III.

"*Ut migraturus habita*" ("Dwell as if about to Depart"). — *Old House Motto.*

THE barrack-master's wife was standing in the porch of her hut, the sides of which were of the simplest trellis-work of crossed fir-poles, thro' which she could watch the proceedings of the gardener without baking herself in the sun. Suddenly she snatched up a green-lined white umbrella, that had seen service in India, and ran out.

"O'Reilly! what *is* that baby doing? There! that white-headed child crossing the parade with a basket in its little arms! It 's got nothing on its head. Please go and take it to its mother before it gets sunstroke."

The gardener was an Irish soldier — an old soldier, as the handkerchief depending from his cap, to protect the nape of his neck from the sun, bore witness. He was a tall man, and stepped without ceremony over the garden paling to get a nearer view of the parade. But he stepped back again at once, and resumed his place in the garden.

"He 's Corporal Macdonald's child, madam. The Blind Baby, they call him. Not a bit of harm will he get. They 're as hard as nails the whole lot of them. If I was to take him in now, he 'd be out before my back was turned. His brothers and sisters are at the school, and Blind Baby 's just as happy as the day is long, playing at funerals all the time."

"Blind! Is he blind? Poor little soul! But he 's got a great round potato basket in his arms. Surely they don't make that afflicted infant fetch and carry?"

O'Reilly laughed so heartily, that he scandalized his own sense of propriety.

"I ask your pardon, madam. But there 's no fear that Blind Baby 'll fetch and carry. Every man in the Lines is his nurse."

"But what 's he doing with that round hamper as big as himself?"

"It 's just a make-believe for the Big Drum, madam. The Dead March is his whole delight. 'T was only

yesterday I said to his father, 'Corporal,' I says, 'we 'll live to see Blind Baby a band-master yet,' I says; 'it 's a pure pleasure to see him beat out a tune with his closed fist.' "

"Will I go and borrow a barrow now, madam?" added O'Reilly, returning to his duties. He was always willing and never idle, but he liked change of occupation.

"No, no. Don't go away. We sha'n't want a wheelbarrow till we 've finished trenching this border, and picking out the stones. Then you can take them away and fetch the new soil."

"You 're at a deal of pains, madam, and it 's a poor patch when all 's done to it."

"I can't live without flowers, O'Reilly, and the Colonel says I may do what I like with this bare strip."

"Ah! Don't touch the dirty stones with your fingers, ma'am. I 'll have the lot picked in no time at all."

"You see, O'Reilly, you can't grow flowers in sand unless you can command water, and the Colonel tells me that when it 's hot here the water supply runs short, and we may n't water the garden from the pumps."

O'Reilly smiled superior.

"The Colonel will get what water he wants, ma'am. Never fear him! There 's ways and means. Look at the gardens of the Royal Engineers' Lines. In the hottest of summer weather they 're as green as

Old Ireland; and it's not to be supposed that the Royal Engineers can requisition showers from the skies when they need them, more than the rest of Her Majesty's forces."

"Perhaps the Royal Engineers do what I mean to do — take more pains than usual; and put in soil that will retain some moisture. One can't make poor land yield anything without pains, O'Reilly, and this is like the dry bed of a stream — all sand and pebbles."

"That's as true a word as ever ye spoke, madam, and if it were not that 't would be taking a liberty, I'd give ye some advice about gardening in Camp. It's not the first time I'm quartered in Asholt, and I know the ways of it."

"I shall be very glad of advice. You know I have never been stationed here before."

"'T is an old soldier's advice, madam."

"So much the better," said the lady, warmly.

O'Reilly was kneeling to his work. He now sat back on his heels, and not without a certain dignity that bade defiance to his surroundings he commenced his oration.

"Please GOD to spare you and the Colonel, madam, to put in his time as Barrack Master at this station, ye'll see many a regiment come and go, and be making themselves at home all along. And anny one that knows this place, and the nature of the soil, tear-rs would overflow his eyes to see the regiments come for drill, and betake themselves to gardening. Maybe the boys have marched in footsore and fasting, in the

hottest of weather, to cold comfort in empty quarters, and they 'll not let many hours flit over their heads before some of 'em 'll get possession of a load of green turf, and be laying it down for borders around their huts. It 's the young ones I 'm speaking of; and there ye 'll see them, in the blazing sun, with their shirts open, and not a thing on their heads, squaring and fitting the turfs for bare life, watering them out of old pie-dishes and stable-buckets and whatnot, singing and whistling, and fetching and carrying between the pump and their quarters, just as cheerful as so many birds building their nests in the spring."

"A very pretty picture, O'Reilly. Why should it bring tears to your eyes? An old soldier like you must know that one would never have a home in quarters at all if one did not begin to make it at once."

"True for you, madam. Not a doubt of it. But it goes to your heart to see labor thrown away; and it 's not once in a hundred times that grass planted like that will get hold of a soil like this, and the boys themselves at drill all along, or gone out under canvas in Bottomless Bog before the week 's over, as likely as not."

"That would be unlucky. But one must take one's luck as it comes. And you 've not told me, now, what you do advise for Camp Gardens."

"That 's just what I 'm coming to, ma'am. See the old soldier! What does *he* do? Turns the bucket

upside down outside his hut, and sits on it, with a cap on his head, and a handkerchief down his back, and some tin tacks, and a ball of string: trust a soldier's eye to get the lines straight — every one of them beginning on the ground and going nearly up to the roof."

"For creepers, I suppose? What does the old soldier plant?"

"Beans, madam — scarlet runners. These are the things for Asholt. A few beans are nothing in your baggage. They like a warm place, and when they're on the sunny side of a hut they've got it, and no mistake. They're growing while you're on duty. The flowers are the right soldier's color; and when it comes to the beans, ye may put your hand out of the window and gather them, and no trouble at all."

"The old soldier is very wise; but I think I must have more flowers than that. So I plant, and if they die I am very sorry; and if they live, and other people have them, I try to be glad. One ought to learn to be unselfish, O'Reilly, and think of one's successors."

"And that's true, madam; barring that I never knew any one's successor to have the same fancies as himself: one plants trees to give shelter, and the next cuts them down to let in the air."

"Well, I suppose the only way is to be prepared for the worst. The rose we planted yesterday by the porch is a great favorite of mine; but the Colonel calls it 'Marching Orders' It used to grow over my

window in my old home, and I have planted it by every home I have had since; but the Colonel says whenever it settled and began to flower the regiment got the route."

"The Colonel must name it again, madam," said O'Reilly, gallantly, as he hitched up the knees of his trousers, and returned to the border. "It shall be 'Standing Orders' now, if soap and water can make it blossom, and I'm spared to attend to it all the time. Many a hundred roses may you and the Colonel pluck from it, and never one with a thorn!"

"Thank you, O'Reilly; thank you very much. Soapy water is very good for roses, I believe?"

"It is so, madam. I put in a good deal of my time as officer's servant after I was in the Connaught Rangers, and the Captain I was with one time was as fond of flowers as yourself. There was a mighty fine rose-bush by his quarters, and every morning I had to carry out his bath to it. He used more soap than most gentlemen, and when he sent me to the town for it — 'It's not for myself, O'Reilly,' he'd say, 'so much as for the Rose. Bring large tablets,' he'd say, 'and the best scented ye can get. The roses'll be the sweeter for it.' That was his way of joking, and never a smile on his face. He was odd in many of his ways, was the Captain, but he was a grand soldier entirely; a good officer, and a good friend to his men, and to the wives and children no less. The regiment was in India when he died of cholera, in twenty-four hours, do what I would. 'Oh, the cramp

in my legs, O'Reilly!' he says. 'GOD bless ye, Captain,' says I; 'never mind your legs; I'd manage the cramp, sir,' I says, 'if I could but keep up your heart.' 'Ye'll not do that, O'Reilly,' he says, 'for all your goodness; I lost it too long ago.' That was his way of joking, and never a smile on his face. 'T was a pestilential hole we were in, and that's the truth; and cost Her Majesty more in lives than would have built healthy quarters and given us every comfort; but the flowers throve there if we did n't, and the Captain's grave was filled till ye could n't get the sight of him for roses. He was a good officer, and beloved of his men; and better master never a man had!"

As he ceased speaking, O'Reilly drew his sleeve sharply across his eyes, and then bent again to his work, which was why he failed to see what the Barrack Master's wife saw, and did not for some moments discover that she was no longer in the garden. The matter was this:

The Barrack Master's quarters were close to the Iron Church, and the straight road that ran past both was crossed, just beyond the church, by another straight road, which finally led out to and joined a country highway. From this highway an open carriage and pair were being driven into the camp as a soldier's funeral was marching to church. The band frightened the horses, who were got past with some difficulty, and having turned the sharp corner, were coming rapidly towards the Barrack Master's hut

when Blind Baby, excited by the band, strayed from his parade-ground, tumbled, basket and all, into the ditch that divided it from the road, picked up himself and his basket, and was sturdily setting forth across the road just as the frightened horses came plunging to the spot.

The Barrack Master's wife was not very young, and not very slender. Rapid movements were not easy to her. She was nervous also, and could never afterwards remember what she did with herself in those brief moments before she became conscious that the footman had got to the horses' heads, and that she herself was almost under their feet, with Blind Baby in her arms. Blind Baby himself recalled her to consciousness by the ungrateful fashion in which he pummelled his deliverer with his fists and howled for his basket, which had rolled under the carriage to add to the confusion. Nor was he to be pacified till O'Reilly took him from her arms.

By this time men had rushed from every hut and kitchen, wash-place and shop, and were swarming to the rescue, and through the whole disturbance, like minute-guns, came the short barks of a black puppy, which Leonard had insisted upon taking with him to show to his aunt despite the protestations of his mother: for it was Lady Jane's carriage, and this was how the sisters met.

They had been sitting together for some time, so absorbed by the strangeness and the pleasure of their

new relations that Leonard and his puppy had slipped away unobserved, when Lady Jane, who was near the window, called to her sister-in-law: — "Adelaide, tell me, my dear, is this Colonel Jones?" She spoke with some trepidation. It is so easy for those unacquainted with uniforms to make strange blunders. Moreover, the Barrack Master, though soldierly looking, was so, despite a very unsoldierly defect. He was exceeding stout, and as he approached the miniature garden-gate, Lady Jane found herself gazing with some anxiety to see if he could possibly get through.

But O'Reilly did not make an empty boast when he said that a soldier's eye was true. The Colonel came quite neatly through the toy entrance, knocked nothing down in the porch, bent and bared his head with one gesture as he passed under the drawing-room doorway, and bowing again to Lady Jane, moved straight to the side of his wife.

Something in the action — a mixture of dignity and devotion, with just a touch of defiance — went to Lady Jane's heart. She went up to him and held out both her hands: — "Please shake hands with me, Colonel Jones. I am so very happy to have found a sister!" In a moment more she turned round, saying: — "I must show you your nephew. Leonard!" But Leonard was not there.

"I fancy I have seen him already," said the Colonel. "If he is a very beautiful boy, very beautifully dressed in velvet, he 's with O'Reilly, watching the funeral."

Lady Jane looked horrified, and Mrs. Jones looked much relieved.

"He's quite safe if he's with O'Reilly. But give me my sunshade, Henry, please; I dare say Lady Jane would like to see the funeral too."

It is an Asholt amenity to take care that you miss no opportunity of seeing a funeral. It would not have occurred to Lady Jane to wish to go, but as her only child had gone she went willingly to look for him. As they turned the corner of the hut they came straight upon it, and at that moment the "Dead March" broke forth afresh.

The drum beat out those familiar notes which strike upon the heart rather than the ear, the brass screamed, the ground trembled to the tramp of feet and the lumbering of the gun-carriage, and Lady Jane's eyes filled suddenly with tears at the sight of the dead man's accoutrements lying on the Union Jack that serves a soldier for a pall. As she dried them she saw Leonard.

Drawn up in accurate line with the edge of the road, O'Reilly was standing to salute, and as near to the Irish private as he could squeeze himself stood the boy, his whole body stretched to the closest possible imitation of his new and deeply-revered friend, his left arm glued to his side, and the back of his little right hand laid against his brow, gazing at the pathetic pageant as it passed him with devouring eyes. And behind them stood Blind Baby, beating upon his basket.

For the basket had been recovered, and Blind Baby's equanimity also; and he wandered up and down the parade again in the sun, long after the soldier's funeral had wailed its way to the graveyard, over the heather-covered hill.

CHAPTER IV.

"My mind is in the anomalous condition of hating war, and loving its discipline, which has been an incalculable contribution to the sentiment of duty . . . the devotion of the common soldier to his leader (the sign for him of hard duty) is the type of all higher devotedness, and is full of promise to other and better generations."

George Eliot.

OUR sister is as nice as nice can be, Rupert and I like the Barrack Master very much, too. He *is* stout! But he is very active and upright, and his manners to his wife are wonderfully pretty. Do you know, there is something to me most touching in the way these two have knocked about the world together, and seem so happy with

so little. Cottagers could hardly live more simply, and yet their ideas, or at any rate their experiences, seem so much larger than one's own."

"My dear Jane! if you've taken them up from the romantic point of view all is, indeed, accomplished. I know the wealth of your imagination, and the riches of its charity. If, in such a mood, you will admit that Jones is stout, he must be fat indeed! Never again upbraid me with the price that I paid for that Chippendale arm-chair. It will hold the Barrack Master."

"Rupert! — I cannot help saying it — it ought to have held him long ago. It makes me miserable to think that they have never been under our roof."

"Jane! Be miserable if you must; but, at least, be accurate. The Barrack Master was in India when I bought that paragon of all Chips, and he has only come home this year. Nay, my dear! Don't be vexed. I give you my word, I 'm a good deal more ashamed than I like to own to think how Adelaide has been treated by the family — with me as its head. Did you make my apologies to-day, and tell her that I shall ride out to-morrow and pay my respects to her and Jones?"

"Of course. I told her you were obliged to go to town, and I would not delay to call and ask if I could be of use to them. I begged them to come here till their quarters are quite finished; but they won't. They say they are settled. I could not say much, because we ought to have asked them sooner. He

is rather on his dignity with us, I think, and no wonder."

"He 's disgustingly on his dignity! They both are. Because the family resented the match at first, they have refused every kind of help that one would have been glad to give him as Adelaide's husband, if only to secure their being in a decent position. Neither interest nor money would he accept, and Adelaide has followed his lead. She has very little of her own, unfortunately; and she knows how my father left things as well as I do, and never would accept a farthing more than her bare rights. I tried some dodges, through Quills; but it was of no use. The vexation is that he has taken this post of Barrack Master as a sort of pension, which need never have been. I suppose they have to make that son an allowance. It 's not likely he lives on his pay. I can't conceive how they scrub along."

And as the Master of the House threw himself into the paragon of all Chips, he ran his fingers through hair, the length and disorder of which would have made the Barrack Master feel positively ill, with a gesture of truly dramatic despair.

"Your sister has made her room look wonderfully pretty. One would never imagine those huts could look as nice as they do inside. But it 's like playing with a doll's house. One feels inclined to examine everything, and to be quite pleased that the windows have glass in them, and will really open and shut."

The Master of the House raised his eyebrows funnily.

"You did take rose-colored spectacles with you to the Camp!"

Lady Jane laughed.

"I did not see the Camp itself through them. What an incomparably dreary place it is! It makes me think of little woodcuts in missionary reports — 'Sketch of a Native Settlement' — rows of little black huts that look, at a distance, as if one must creep into them on all-fours; nobody about, and an iron church on the hill."

"Most accurately described! And you wonder that I regret that a native settlement should have been removed from the enchanting distance of missionary reports to become my permanent neighbor."

"Well, I must confess the effect it produces on me is to make me feel quite ashamed of the peace and pleasure of this dear old place, the shade and greenery outside, the space above my head, and the lovely things before my eyes inside (for you know, Rupert, how I appreciate your decorative tastes, though I have so few myself. I only scolded about the Chip because I think you might have got him for less) — when so many men bred to similar comforts, and who have served their country so well, with wives I dare say quite as delicate as I am, have to be cooped up in those ugly little kennels in that dreary place —"

"What an uncomfortable thing a Scotch conscience is!" interrupted the Master of the House. "By-the-

bye, those religious instincts, which are also characteristic of your race, must have found one redeeming feature in the Camp, the 'iron church on the hill;' especially as I imagine that it is puritanically ugly!"

"There was a funeral going into it as we drove into Camp, and I wanted to tell you the horses were very much frightened."

"Richards fidgets those horses; they're quiet enough with me."

"They did not like the military band."

"They must get used to the band and to other military nuisances. It is written in the stars, as I too clearly foresee, that we shall be driving in and out of that Camp three days a-week. I can't go to my club without meeting men I was at school with who are stationed at Asholt, and expect me to look them up. As to the women, I met a man yesterday who is living in a hut, and expects a Dowager Countess and her two daughters for the ball. He has given up his dressing-room to the Dowager, and put two barrack-beds into the coal-hole for the young ladies, he says. It's an insanity!"

"Adelaide told me about the ball. The Camp seems very gay just now. They have had theatricals; and there is to be a grand Field Day this week."

"So our visitors have already informed me. They expect to go. Louisa Mainwaring is looking handsomer than ever, and I have always regarded her as a girl with a mind. I took her to see the peep I have cut opposite to the island, and I could not

imagine why those fine eyes of hers looked so blank. Presently she said, 'I suppose you can see the Camp from the little pine-wood?' And to the little pine-wood we had to go. Both the girls have got stiff necks with craning out of the carriage window to catch sight of the white tents among the heather as they came along in the train."

"I suppose we must take them to the Field Day, but I am very nervous about those horses, Rupert."

"The horses will be taken out before any firing begins. As to bands, the poor creatures must learn, like their master, to endure the brazen liveliness of military music. It 's no fault of mine that our nerves are scarified by any sounds less soothing than the crooning of the wood pigeons among the pines!"

No one looked forward to the big Field Day with keener interest than Leonard; and only a few privileged persons knew more about the arrangements for the day than he had contrived to learn.

O'Reilly was sent over with a note from Mrs. Jones to decline the offer of a seat in Lady Jane's carriage for the occasion. She was not very well. Leonard waylaid the messenger (whom he hardly recognized as a tidy one!), and O'Reilly gladly imparted all that he knew about the Field Day: and this was a good deal. He had it from a friend — a corporal in the Head Quarters Office.

As a rule, Leonard only enjoyed a limited popularity with his mother's visitors. He was very pretty and very amusing, and had better qualities even than

these; but he was restless and troublesome. On this occasion, however, the young ladies suffered him to trample their dresses and interrupt their conversation without remonstrance. He knew more about the Field Day than any one in the house, and, standing among their pretty furbelows and fancy-work in stiff military attitudes, he imparted his news with an unsuccessful imitation of an Irish accent.

"O'Reilly says the March Past 'll be at eleven o'clock on the Sandy Slopes."

"Louisa, is that Major O'Reilly of the Rifles?"

"I don't know, dear. Is your friend O'Reilly in the Rifles, Leonard?"

"I don't know. I know he's an owld soldier — he told me so."

"Old, Leonard; not owld. You must n't talk like that."

"I shall if I like. *He* does, and I mean to."

"I dare say he did, Louisa. He's always joking."

"No, he is n't. He did n't joke when the funeral went past. He looked quite grave, as if he was saying his prayers, and stood *so*."

"How touching!"

"How like him!"

"How graceful and tender-hearted Irishmen are!"

"I stood so, too. I mean to do as like him as ever I can. I do love him so very very much!"

"Dear boy!"

"You good, affectionate little soul!"

"Give me a kiss, Leonard dear."

"No, thank you. I 'm too old for kissing. He 's going to march past, and he 's going to look out for me with the tail of his eye, and I 'm going to look out for him."

"Do, Leonard; and mind you tell us when you see him coming."

"I can't promise. I might forget. But perhaps you can know him by the good-conduct stripe on his arm. He used to have two; but he lost one all along of St. Patrick's Day."

"That *can't* be your partner, Louisa!"

"Officers *never* have good-conduct stripes."

"Leonard, you ought not to talk to common soldiers. You 've got a regular Irish brogue, and you 're learning all sorts of ugly words. You 'll grow up quite a vulgar little boy, if you don't take care."

"I don't want to take care. I like being Irish, and I shall be a vulgar little boy too, if I choose. But when I do grow up, I am going to grow into an owld, owld, Owld Soldier!"

Leonard made this statement of his intentions in his clearest manner. After which, having learned that the favor of the fair is fickleness, he left the ladies, and went to look for his Black Puppy.

The Master of the House, in arranging for his visitors to go to the Field Day, had said that Leonard was not to be of the party. He had no wish to encourage the child's fancy for soldiers: and as Leonard was invariably restless out driving, and had a trick of kicking people's shins in his changes of mood and

position, he was a most uncomfortable element in a carriage full of ladies. But it is needless to say that he stoutly resisted his father's decree; and the child's disappointment was so bitter, and he howled and wept himself into such a deplorable condition that the young ladies sacrificed their own comfort and the crispness of their new dresses to his grief, and petitioned the Master of the House that he might be allowed to go.

The Master of the House gave in. He was accustomed to yield where Leonard was concerned. But the concession proved only a prelude to another struggle. Leonard wanted the Black Puppy to go too.

On this point the young ladies presented no petition. Leonard's boots they had resolved to endure, but not the dog's paws. Lady Jane, too, protested against the puppy, and the matter seemed settled; but at the last moment, when all but Leonard were in the carriage, and the horses chafing to be off, the child made his appearance, and stood on the entrance-steps with his puppy in his arms, and announced, in dignified sorrow, "I really cannot go if my Sweep has to be left behind."

With one consent the grown-up people turned to look at him.

Even the intoxicating delight that color gives can hardly exceed the satisfying pleasure in which beautiful proportions steep the sense of sight; and one is often at fault to find the law that has been so exqui-

sitely fulfilled, when the eye has no doubt of its own satisfaction.

The shallow stone steps, on the top of which Leonard stood, and the old doorway that framed him, had this mysterious grace, and, truth to say, the boy's beauty was a jewel not unworthy of its setting.

A holiday dress of crimson velvet, with collar and ruffles of old lace, became him very quaintly; and as he laid a cheek like a rose-leaf against the sooty head of his pet, and they both gazed piteously at the carriage, even Lady Jane's conscience was stifled by motherly pride. He was her only child, but as he had said of the Orderly, "a very splendid sort of one."

The Master of the House stamped his foot with an impatience that was partly real and partly, perhaps, affected.

"Well, get in somehow, if you mean to. The horses can't wait all day for you."

No ruby-throated humming-bird could have darted more swiftly from one point to another than Leonard from the old gray steps into the carriage. Little boys can be very careful when they choose, and he trode on no toes and crumpled no finery in his flitting.

To those who know dogs, it is needless to say that the puppy showed an even superior discretion. It bore throttling without a struggle. Instinctively conscious of the alternative of being shut up in a stable for the day, and left there to bark its heart out, it shrank patiently into Leonard's grasp, and betrayed

no sign of life except in the strained and pleading anxiety which a puppy's eyes so often wear.

"Your dog is a very good dog, Leonard, I must say," said Louisa Mainwaring; "but he's very ugly. I never saw such legs!"

Leonard tucked the lank black legs under his velvet and ruffles. "Oh, he's all right," he said. "He'll be very handsome soon. It's his ugly mouth."

"I wonder you didn't insist on our bringing Uncle Rupert and *his* dog to complete the party," said the Master of the House.

The notion tickled Leonard, and he laughed so heartily that the puppy's legs got loose, and required to be tucked in afresh. Then both remained quiet for several seconds, during which the puppy looked as anxious as ever; but Leonard's face wore a smile of dreamy content that doubled its loveliness.

But as the carriage passed the windows of the library a sudden thought struck him, and dispersed his repose.

Gripping his puppy firmly under his arm, he sprang to his feet — regardless of other people's — and waving his cap and feather above his head he cried aloud, "Good-bye, Uncle Rupert! Can you hear me? Uncle Rupert, I say! I am — *lætus — sorte — mea!*"

. . . . . .

All the Camp was astir.

Men and bugles awoke with the dawn and the birds, and now the women and children of all ranks were on the alert. (Nowhere does so large and enthusiastic a

crowd collect "to see the pretty soldiers go by," as in those places where pretty soldiers live.)

Soon after gun-fire O'Reilly made his way from his own quarters to those of the Barrack Master, opened the back-door by some process best known to himself, and had been busy for half an hour in the drawing-room before his proceedings woke the Colonel. They had been as noiseless as possible; but the Colonel's dressing-room opened into the drawing-room, his bedroom opened into that, and all the doors and windows were open to court the air.

"Who 's there?" said the Colonel from his pillow.

"'T is O'Reilly, Sir. I ask your pardon, Sir; but I heard that the Mistress was not well. She 'll be apt to want the reclining-chair, Sir; and 't was damaged in the unpacking. I got the screws last night, but I was busy soldiering[1] till too late; so I come in this morning, for Smith 's no good at a job of the kind at all. He 's a butcher to his trade."

"Mrs. Jones is much obliged to you for thinking of it, O'Reilly."

"'T is an honor to oblige her, Sir. I done it sound and secure. 'T is as safe as a rock; but I 'd like to nail a bit of canvas on from the porch to the other side of the hut, for shelter, in case she 'd be sitting out to taste the air and see the troops go by. 'T will not take me five minutes, if the hammering would n't

[1] "Soldiering" — a barrack term for the furbishing up of accoutrements, etc

be too much for the Mistress. 'T is a hot day, Sir, for certain, till the guns bring the rain down."

"Put it up, if you 've time."

"I will, Sir. I left your sword and gloves on the kitchen-table, Sir; and I told Smith to water the rose before the sun 's on to it."

With which O'Reilly adjusted the cushions of the invalid-chair, and having nailed up the bit of canvas outside, so as to form an impromptu veranda, he ran back to his quarters to put himself into marching order for the Field Day.

The Field Day broke into smiles of sunshine too early to be lasting. By breakfast time the rain came down without waiting for the guns; but those most concerned took the changes of weather cheerfully, as soldiers should. Rain damages uniforms, but it lays dust; and the dust of the Sandy Slopes was dust indeed!

After a pelting shower the sun broke forth again, and from that time onwards the weather was "Queen's Weather," and Asholt was at its best. The sandy Camp lay girdled by a zone of the verdure of early summer, which passed by miles of distance, through exquisite gradations of many blues, to meet the soft threatenings of the changeable sky. Those lowering and yet tender rain clouds which hover over the British Isles, guardian spirits of that scantly recognized blessing — a temperate climate; Naiads of the waters over the earth, whose caprices betwixt storm and sunshine fling such beauty upon a landscape as

has no parallel except in the common simile of a fair face quivering between tears and smiles.

Smiles were in the ascendant as the regiments began to leave their parade-grounds, and the surface of the Camp (usually quiet, even to dulness) sparkled with movement. Along every principal road the color and glitter of marching troops rippled like streams, and as the band of one regiment died away another broke upon the excited ear.

At the outlets of the Camp eager crowds waited patiently in the dusty hedges to greet favorite regiments, or watch for personal friends amongst the troops; and on the ways to the Sandy Slopes every kind of vehicle, from a drag to a donkey-cart, and every variety of pedestrian, from an energetic tourist carrying a field-glass to a more admirably energetic mother carrying a baby, disputed the highway with cavalry in brazen breastplates, and horse-artillery whose gallant show was drowned in its own dust.

Lady Jane's visitors had expressed themselves as anxious not to miss anything, and troops were still pouring out of the Camp when the Master of the House brought his skittish horses to where a "block" had just occurred at the turn to the Sandy Slopes.

What the shins and toes of the visitors endured whilst that knot of troops of all arms disentangled itself and streamed away in gay and glittering lines, could only have been concealed by the supreme powers of endurance latent in the weaker sex; for with the sight of every fresh regiment Leonard

changed his plans for his own future career, and with every change he forgot a fresh promise to keep quiet, and took by storm that corner of the carriage which for the moment offered the best point of view.

Suddenly, through the noise and dust, and above the dying away of conflicting bands into the distance, there came another sound — a sound unlike any other — the skirling of the pipes; and Lady Jane sprang up and put her arms about her son, and bade him watch for the Highlanders, and if Cousin Alan looked up as he went past to cry "Hurrah for Bonnie Scotland!"

For this sound and this sight — the bagpipes and the Highlanders — a sandy-faced Scotch lad on the tramp to Southampton had waited for an hour past, frowning and freckling his face in the sun, and exasperating a naturally *dour* temper by reflecting on the probable pride and heartlessness of folk who wore such soft complexions and pretty clothes as the ladies and the little boy in the carriage on the other side of the road.

But when the skirling of the pipes cleft the air his cold eyes softened as he caught sight of Leonard's face, and the echo that he made to Leonard's cheer was caught up by the good-humored crowd, who gave the Scotch regiment a willing ovation as it swung proudly by. After which the carriage moved on, and for a time Leonard sat very still. He was thinking of Cousin Alan and his comrades; of the tossing plumes that shaded their fierce eyes; of the

swing of kilt and sporran with their unfettered limbs; of the rhythmic tread of their white feet and the fluttering ribbons on the bagpipes; and of Alan's handsome face looking out of his most becoming bravery.

The result of his meditations Leonard announced with his usual lucidity: —

"I am Scotch, not Irish, though O'Reilly *is* the nicest man I ever knew. But I must tell him that I really cannot grow up into an Owld Soldier, because I mean to be a young Highland officer, and look at ladies with my eyes like *this* — and carry my sword *so!*"

CHAPTER V.

"Oh that a man might know the end of this day's business ere it comes!"

Julius Cæsar.

YEARS of living amongst soldiers had increased, rather than diminished, Mrs. Jones's relish for the sights and sounds of military life.

The charm of novelty is proverbially great, but it is not so powerful as that peculiar spell which drew the retired tallow-chandler back to "shop" on melting-days, and which guided the choice of the sexton of a cemetery who only took one holiday

trip in the course of seven years, and then he went to a cemetery at some distance to see how they managed matters there. And, indeed, poor humanity may be very thankful for the infatuation, since it goes far to make life pleasant in the living to plain folk who do not make a point of being discontented.

In obedience to this law of nature, the Barrack Master's wife did exactly what O'Reilly had expected her to do. As she could not drive to the Field Day, she strolled out to see the troops go by. Then the vigor derived from breakfast and the freshness of the morning air began to fail, the day grew hotter, the camp looked dreary and deserted, and, either from physical weakness or from some untold cause, a nameless anxiety, a sense of trouble in the air, began to oppress her.

Wandering out again to try and shake it off, it was almost a relief, like the solving of a riddle, to find Blind Baby sitting upon his Big Drum, too low-spirited to play the Dead March, and crying because all the bands had "gone right away." Mrs. Jones made friends with him, and led him off to her hut for consolation, and he was soon as happy as ever, standing by the piano and beating upon his basket in time to the tunes she played for him. But the day and the hut grew hotter, and her back ached, and the nameless anxiety reasserted itself, and was not relieved by Blind Baby's preference for the Dead March over every other tune with which she tried to beguile him.

And when he had gone back to his own Parade, with a large piece of cake and many assurances that the bands would undoubtedly return, and the day wore on, and the hut became like an oven (in the absence of any appliances to mitigate the heat), the Barrack Master's wife came to the hasty conclusion that Asholt was hotter than India, whatever thermometers might say; and, too weary to seek for breezes outside, or to find a restful angle of the reclining-chair inside, she folded her hands in her lap and abandoned herself to the most universal remedy for most ills — patience. And Patience was its own reward, for she fell asleep.

Her last thoughts as she dozed off were of her husband and her son, wishing that they were safe home again, that she might assure herself that it was not on their account that there was trouble in the air. Then she dreamed of being roused by the Colonel's voice saying, "I have bad news to tell you —" and was really awakened by straining in her dream to discover what hindered him from completing his sentence.

She had slept some time — it was now afternoon, and the air was full of sounds of the returning bands. She went out into the road and saw the Barrack Master (he was easy to distinguish at some distance!) pause on his homeward way, and then she saw her son running to join his father, with his sword under his arm; and they came on together, talking, as they came.

And as soon as they got within earshot she said, "Have you bad news to tell me?"

The Colonel ran up and drew her hand within his arm.

"Come indoors, dear Love."

"You are both well?"

"Both of us. Brutally so."

"Quite well, dear Mother."

Her son was taking her other hand into caressing care; there could be no doubt about the bad news.

"Please tell me what it is."

"There has been an accident —"

"To whom?"

"To your brother's child; that jolly little chap —"

"Oh, Henry! how?"

"He was standing up in the carriage, I believe, with a dog in his arms. George saw him when he went past — did n't you?"

"Yes. I wonder he did n't fall then. I fancy some one had told him it was our regiment. The dog was struggling, but he would take off his hat to us —"

The young soldier choked, and added with difficulty, "I think I never saw so lovely a face. Poor little cousin!"

"And he overbalanced himself?"

"Not when George saw him. I believe it was when the Horse Artillery were going by at the gallop. They say he got so much excited, and the dog barked, and they both fell. Some say there were people moving a drag, and some that he fell under the

horse of a patrol. Anyhow, I'm afraid he's very much hurt. They took him straight home in an ambulance-wagon to save time. Erskine went with him. I sent off a telegram for them for a swell surgeon from town, and Lady Jane promised a line if I send over this evening. O'Reilly must go after dinner and wait for the news."

O'Reilly, sitting stiffly amid the coming and going of the servants at the Hall, was too deeply devoured by anxiety to trouble himself as to whether the footman's survey of his uniform bespoke more interest or contempt. But when — just after gun-fire had sounded from the distant camp — Jemima brought him the long-waited-for note, he caught the girl's hand, and held it for some moments before he was able to say, "Just tell me, miss; is it good news or bad that I'll be carrying back in this bit of paper?" And as Jemima only answered by sobs, he added, almost impatiently, "Will he live, dear? Nod your head if ye can do no more."

Jemima nodded, and the soldier dropped her hand, drew a long breath, and gave himself one of those shakes with which an Irishman so often throws off care.

"Ah, then, dry your eyes, darlin': while there's life there's hope."

But Jemima sobbed still.

"The doctor — from London — says he may live a good while, but — but — he's to be a cripple all his days!"

"Now would n't I rather be meeting a tiger this evening than see the mistress's face when she gets that news!"

And O'Reilly strode back to the camp.

Going along through a shady part of the road in the dusk, seeing nothing but the red glow of the pipe with which he was consoling himself, the soldier stumbled against a lad sleeping on the grass by the roadside. It was the tramping Scotchman, and as he sprang to his feet the two Kelts broke into a fiery dialogue that seemed as if it could only come to blows.

It did not. It came to the good-natured soldier's filling the wayfarer's pipe for him.

"Much good may it do ye! And maybe the next time a decent man that 's hastening home on the wings of misfortune stumbles against ye, ye 'll not be so apt to take offence."

"I ask your pardon, man; I was barely wakened, and I took ye for one of these gay red-coats blustering hame after a bloodless battle on the Field Day, as they ca' it."

"Bad luck to the Field Day! A darker never dawned; and would n't a bloodier battle have spared a child?"

"Your child? What 's happened to the bairn?"

"My child indeed! And his mother a lady of title, no less."

"What 's got him?"

"Fell out of the carriage, and was trampled into a cripple for all the days of his life. He that had set

as fine a heart as ever beat on being a soldier; and a grand one he'd have made. 'Sure 't is a nobleman ye'll be,' says I. ''T is an owld soldier I mean to be, O'Reilly,' says he. And —"

"Fond of the soldiers — his mother a leddy? Man! Had he a braw new velvet coat and the face of an angel on him?"

"He had so."

"And I that thocht they'd all this warld could offer them! — A cripple? Ech, sirs!"

CHAPTER VI.

"I will do it . . . for I am weak by nature, and very timorous, unless where a strong sense of duty holdeth and supporteth me. There God acteth, and not His creature." — *Lady Jane Grey.*

LEONARD was to some extent a spoiled child. But it demands a great deal of unselfish foresight, and of self-discipline, to do more for a beautiful and loving pet than play with it.

And if his grace and beauty and high spirits had been strong temptations to give him everything he desired, and his own way above all, how much greater were the excuses for indulging every whim when the radiant loveliness of health had faded to the wan wistfulness of pain, when the young

limbs bounded no more, and when his boyish hopes and hereditary ambitions were cut off by the shears of a destiny that seemed drearier than death?

As soon as the poor child was able to be moved his parents took a place on the west coast of Scotland, and carried him thither.

The neighborhood of Asholt had become intolerable to them for some time to come, and a soft climate and sea-breezes were recommended for his general health.

Jemima's dismissal was revoked. Leonard flatly, and indeed furiously, refused to have any other nurse. During the first crisis a skilled hospital nurse was engaged, but from the time that he fully recovered consciousness he would receive help from no hands but those of Jemima and Lady Jane.

Far older and wiser patients than he become ruthless in their demands upon the time and strength of those about them; and Leonard did not spare his willing slaves by night or by day. It increased their difficulties and his sufferings that the poor child was absolutely unaccustomed to prompt obedience, and disputed the Doctor's orders as he had been accustomed to dispute all others.

Lady Jane's health became very much broken, but Jemima was fortunately possessed of a sturdy body and an inactive mind, and with a devotion little less than maternal she gave up both to Leonard's service.

He had a third slave of his bed-chamber — a black one — the Black Puppy, from whom he had resolutely

refused to part, and whom he insisted upon having upon his bed, to the Doctor's disgust. When months passed, and the Black Puppy became a Black Dog, large and cumbersome, another effort was made to induce Leonard to part with him at night; but he only complained bitterly.

"It is very odd that there cannot be a bed big enough for me and my dog. I am an invalid, and I ought to have what I want."

So The Sweep remained as his bedfellow.

The Sweep also played the part of the last straw in the drama of Jemima's life; for Leonard would allow no one but his own dear nurse to wash his own dear dog; and odd hours, in which Jemima might have snatched a little rest and relaxation, were spent by her in getting the big dog's still lanky legs into a tub, and keeping him there, and washing him, and drying and combing him into fit condition to spring back on to Leonard's coverlet when that imperious little invalid called for him.

It was a touching manifestation of the dog's intelligence that he learned with the utmost care to avoid jostling or hurting the poor suffering little body of his master.

Leonard's fourth slave was his father.

But the Master of the House had no faculty for nursing, and was by no means possessed of the patience needed to persuade Leonard for his good. So he could only be with the child when he was fit to be read or played to, and later on, when he was able to

be out of doors. And at times he went away out of sight of his son's sufferings, and tried to stifle the remembrance of a calamity and disappointment, whose bitterness his own heart alone fully knew.

After the lapse of nearly two years Leonard suddenly asked to be taken home. He was tired of the shore, and wanted to see if The Sweep remembered the park. He wanted to see if Uncle Rupert would look surprised to see him going about in a wheel-chair. He wanted to go to the Camp again, now the doctor said he might have drives, and see if O'Reilly was alive still, and his uncle, and his aunt, and his cousin. He wanted father to play to him on their own organ, their very own organ, and — no, thank you! — he did not want any other music now.

He hated this nasty place, and wanted to go home. If he was going to live he wanted to live there, and if he was going to die he wanted to die there, and have his funeral his own way, if they knew a General and could borrow a gun-carriage and a band.

He did n't want to eat or to drink, or to go to sleep, or to take his medicine, or to go out and send The Sweep into the sea, or to be read to or played to; he wanted to go home — home — home!

The upshot of which was, that before his parents had time to put into words the idea that the agonizing associations of Asholt were still quite unendurable, they found themselves congratulating each other on having got Leonard safely home before he had cried

himself into convulsions over twenty-four hours' delay.

For a time, being at home seemed to revive him. He was in less pain, in better spirits, had more appetite, and was out a great deal with his dog and his nurse. But he fatigued himself, which made him fretful, and he certainly grew more imperious every day.

His whim was to be wheeled into every nook and corner of the place, inside and out, and to show them to The Sweep. And who could have had the heart to refuse him anything in the face of that dread affliction which had so changed him amid the unchanged surroundings of his old home?

Jemima led the life of a prisoner on the tread-mill. When she was n't pushing him about she was going errands for him, fetching and carrying. She was "never off her feet."

He moved about a little now on crutches, though he had not strength to be very active with them, as some cripples are. But they became ready instruments of his impatience to thump the floor with one end, and not infrequently to strike those who offended him with the other.

His face was little less beautiful than of old, but it looked wan and weird; and his beauty was often marred by what is more destructive of beauty even than sickness — the pinched lines of peevishness and ill-temper. He suffered less, but he looked more unhappy, was more difficult to please, and more

impatient with all efforts to please him. But then, though nothing is truer than that patience is its own reward, it has to be learned first. And, with children, what has to be learned must be taught.

To this point Lady Jane's meditations brought her one day as she paced up and down her own morning-room, and stood before the window which looked down where the elm-trees made long shadows on the grass; for the sun was declining, greatly to Jemima's relief, who had been toiling in Leonard's service through the hottest hours of a summer day.

Lady Jane had a tender conscience, and just now it was a very uneasy one. She was one of those somewhat rare souls who are by nature absolutely true. Not so much with elaborate avoidance of lying, or an aggressive candor, as straight-minded, single-eyed, clear-headed, and pure-hearted; a soul to which the truth and reality of things, and the facing of things, came as naturally as the sham of them and the blinking of them comes to others.

When such a nature has strong affections it is no light matter if love and duty come into conflict. They were in conflict now, and the mother's heart was pierced with a two-edged sword. For if she truly believed what she believed, her duty towards Leonard was not only that of a tender mother to a suffering child, but the duty of one soul to another soul, whose responsibilities no man might deliver him from, nor make agreement unto GOD that he should be quit of them.

And if the disabling of his body did not stop the developing, one way or another, of his mind; if to learn fortitude and patience under his pains was not only his highest duty but his best chance of happiness; then, if she failed to teach him these, of what profit was it that she would willingly have endured all his sufferings ten times over that life might be all sunshine for him?

And deep down in her truthful soul another thought rankled. No one but herself knew how the pride of her heart had been stirred by Leonard's love for soldiers, his brave ambitions, the high spirit and heroic instincts which he inherited from a long line of gallant men and noble women. Had her pride been a sham? Did she only care for the courage of the battle-field? Was she willing that her son should be a coward, because it was not the trumpet's sound that summoned him to fortitude? She had strung her heart to the thought that, like many a mother of her race, she might live to gird on his sword; should she fail to help him to carry his cross?

At this point a cry came from below the window, and looking out she saw Leonard, beside himself with passion, raining blows like hail with his crutch upon poor Jemima; The Sweep watching matters nervously from under a garden seat.

Leonard had been irritable all day, and this was the second serious outbreak. The first had sent the Master of the House to town with a deeply-knitted brow.

Vexed at being thwarted in some slight matter, when he was sitting in his wheel-chair by the side of his father in the library, he had seized a sheaf of papers tied together with amber-colored ribbon, and had torn them to shreds. It was a fair copy of the first two cantos of *The Soul's Satiety*, a poem on which the Master of the House had been engaged for some years. He had not touched it in Scotland, and was now beginning to work at it again. He could not scold his cripple child, but he had gone up to London in a far from comfortable mood.

And now Leonard was banging poor Jemima with his crutches! Lady Jane felt that her conscience had not roused her an hour too soon.

The Master of the House dined in town, and Leonard had tea with his mother in her very own room; and The Sweep had tea there too.

And when the old elms looked black against the primrose-colored sky, and it had been Leonard's bed-time for half an hour past, the three were together still.

. . . . . .

"I beg your pardon, Jemima, I am very sorry, and I 'll never do so any more. I did n't want to beg your pardon before, because I was naughty, and because you trode on my Sweep's foot. But I beg your pardon now, because I am good — at least I am better, and I am going to try to be good."

Leonard's voice was as clear as ever, and his manner as direct and forcible. Thus he contrived to say

so much before Jemima burst in (she was putting him to bed).

"My lamb! my pretty! You're always good—"

"Don't tell stories, Jemima; and please don't contradict me, for it makes me cross; and if I am cross I can't be good; and if I am not good all to-morrow I am not to be allowed to go downstairs after dinner. And there's a V. C. coming to dinner, and I do want to see him more than I want anything else in all the world."

CHAPTER VII.

"What is there in the world to distinguish virtues from dishonor, or that can make anything rewardable, but the labor and the danger, the pain and the difficulty?" —*Jeremy Taylor.*

THE V. C. did not look like a bloodthirsty warrior. He had a smooth, oval, olivart face, and dreamy eyes. He was not very big, and he was absolutely unpretending. He was a young man, and only by the courtesy of his manners escaped the imputation of being a shy young man.

Before the campaign in which he won his cross he was most distinctively known in society as having a

very beautiful voice and a very charming way of singing, and yet as giving himself no airs on the subject of an accomplishment which makes some men almost intolerable by their fellow-men.

He was a favorite with ladies on several accounts, large and small. Among the latter was his fastidious choice in the words of the songs he sang, and sang with a rare fineness of enunciation.

It is not always safe to believe that a singer means what he sings; but if he sing very noble words with justness and felicity, the ear rarely refuses to flatter itself that it is learning some of the secrets of a noble heart.

Upon a silence that could be felt the last notes of such a song had just fallen. The V. C.'s lips were closed, and those of the Master of the House (who had been accompanying him) were still parted with a smile of approval, when the wheels of his chair and some little fuss at the drawing-room door announced that Leonard had come to claim his mother's promise. And when Lady Jane rose and went to meet him, the V. C. followed her.

"There is my boy, of whom I told you. Leonard, this is the gentleman you have wished so much to see."

The V. C., who sang so easily, was not a ready speaker, and the sight of Leonard took him by surprise, and kept him silent. He had been prepared to pity and be good-natured to a lame child who had a whim to see him; but not for this vision of rare

beauty, beautifully dressed, with crippled limbs lapped in Eastern embroideries by his color-loving father, and whose wan face and wonderful eyes were lambent with an intelligence so eager and so wistful, that the creature looked less like a morsel of suffering humanity than like a soul fretted by the brief detention of an all-but-broken chain.

"How do you do, V. C.? I am very glad to see you. I wanted to see you more than anything in the world. I hope you don't mind seeing me because I have been a coward, for I mean to be brave now; and that is why I wanted to see you so much, because you are such a very brave man. The reason I was a coward was partly with being so cross when my back hurts, but particularly with hitting Jemima with my crutches, for no one but a coward strikes a woman. She trode on my dog's toes. This is my dog. Please pat him; he would like to be patted by a V. C. He is called The Sweep because he is black. He lives with me all along. I *have* hit *him*, but I hope I shall not be naughty again any more. I wanted to grow up into a brave soldier, but I don't think, perhaps, that I ever can now; but mother says I can be a brave cripple. I would rather be a brave soldier, but I'm going to try to be a brave cripple. Jemima says there's no saying what you can do till you try. Please show me your Victoria Cross."

"It's on my tunic, and that's in my quarters in Camp. I'm so sorry."

"So am I. I knew you lived in Camp I like the

Camp, and I want you to tell me about your hut. Do you know my uncle, Colonel Jones? Do you know my aunt, Mrs. Jones? And my cousin, Mr. Jones? Do you know a very nice Irishman, with one good-conduct stripe, called O'Reilly? Do you know my cousin Alan in the Highlanders? But I believe he has gone away. I have so many things I want to ask you, and oh! — those ladies are coming after us! They want to take you away. Look at that ugly old thing with a hook-nose and an eye-glass, and a lace shawl and a green dress; she's just like the Poll Parrot in the housekeeper's room. But she's looking at you. Mother! Mother dear! Don't let them take him away. You did promise me, you know you did, that if I was good all to-day I should talk to the V. C. I can't talk to him if I can't have him all to myself. Do let us go into the library, and be all to ourselves. Do keep those women away, particularly the Poll Parrot. Oh, I hope I sha'n't be naughty! I do feel so impatient! I was good, you know I was. Why does n't James come and show my friend into the library, and carry me out of my chair?"

"Let me carry you, little friend, and we'll run away together, and the company will say, 'There goes a V. C. running away from a Poll Parrot in a lace shawl!'"

"Ha! ha! You are nice and funny. But *can* you carry me? Take off this thing! Did you ever carry anybody that had been hurt?"

"Yes, several people — much bigger than you."

"Men?"

"Men."

"Men hurt like me, or wounded in battle?"

"Wounded in battle."

"Poor things! Did they die?"

"Some of them."

"I shall die pretty soon, I believe. I meant to die young, but more grown-up than this, and in battle. About your age, I think. How old are you?"

"I shall be twenty-five in October."

"That's rather old. I meant about Uncle Rupert's age. He died in battle. He was seventeen. You carry very comfortably. Now we're safe! Put me on the yellow sofa, please. I want all the cushions, because of my back. It's because of my back, you know, that I can't grow up into a soldier. I don't think I possibly can. Soldiers do have to have such very straight backs, and Jemima thinks mine will never be straight again 'on this side the grave.' So I've got to try and be brave as I am; and that's why I wanted to see you. Do you mind my talking rather more than you? I have so very much to say, and I've only a quarter of an hour, because of its being long past my bed-time, and a good lot of that has gone."

"Please talk, and let me listen."

"Thank you. Pat The Sweep again, please. He thinks we're neglecting him. That's why he gets up and knocks you with his head."

"Poor Sweep! Good old dog!"

"Thank you. Now should you think that if I am very good, and not cross about a lot of pain in my back and my head — really a good lot — that that would count up to be as brave as having one wound if I'd been a soldier?"

"Certainly."

"Mother says it would, and I think it might. Not a very big wound, of course, but a poke with a spear, or something of that sort. It *is* very bad sometimes, particularly when it keeps you awake at night."

"My little friend, *that* would count for lying out all night wounded on the field when the battle 's over. Soldiers are not always fighting."

"Did you ever lie out for a night on a battle-field?"

"Yes, once."

"Did the night seem very long?"

"Very long; and we were very thirsty."

"So am I sometimes, but I have barley-water and lemons by my bed, and jelly, and lots of things. You 'd no barley-water, had you?"

"No."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing till the rain fell, then we sucked our clothes."

"It would take a lot of my bad nights to count up to that! But I think when I 'm ill in bed I might count that like being a soldier in hospital?"

"Of course."

"I thought — no matter how good I got to be — nothing could ever count up to be as brave as a real battle, leading your men on and fighting for your country, though you know you may be killed any minute. But Mother says, if I *could* try very hard, and think of poor Jemima as well as myself, and keep brave in spite of feeling miserable, that then (particularly as I sha'n't be very long before I do die) it would be as good as if I 'd lived to be as old as Uncle Rupert, and fought bravely when the battle was against me, and cheered on my men, though I knew I could never come out of it alive. Do you think it *could* count up to that? *Do you?* Oh, do answer me, and don't stroke my head! I get so impatient. You 've been in battles — do you?"

"I do, I do."

"You 're a V. C., and you ought to know. I suppose nothing — not even if I could be good always, from this minute right away till I die — nothing could ever count up to the courage of a V. C.?"

"GOD knows it could, a thousand times over!"

"Where are you going? Please don't go. Look at me. They 're not going to chop the Queen's head off, are they?"

"Heaven forbid! What are you thinking about?"

"Why, because — Look at me again. Ah! you've winked it away, but your eyes were full of tears; and the only other brave man I ever heard of crying was Uncle Rupert, and that was because he knew they were going to chop the poor King's head off."

"That was enough to make anybody cry."

"I know it was. But do you know now, when I 'm wheeling about in my chair and playing with him, and he looks at me wherever I go; sometimes for a bit I forget about the King, and I fancy he is sorry for me. Sorry, I mean, that I can't jump about, and creep under the table. Under the table was the only place where I could get out of the sight of his eyes. Oh, dear! There 's Jemima."

"But you are going to be good?"

"I know I am. And I 'm going to do lessons again. I did a little French this morning — a story. Mother did most of it; but I know what the French officer called the poor old French soldier when he went to see him in a hospital."

"What?"

"*Mon brave.* That means 'my brave fellow.' A nice name, was n't it?"

"Very nice. Here 's Jemima."

"I 'm coming, Jemima. I 'm not going to be naughty; but you may go back to the chair, for this officer will carry me. He carries so comfortably. Come along, my Sweep. Thank you so much. You have put me in beautifully. Kiss me, please. Good night, V. C."

"Good night, *mon brave.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

"'I am a man of no strength at all of body, nor yet of mind; but would, if I could, though I can but crawl, spend my life in the pilgrims' way. When I came at the gate that is at the head of the way, the lord of that place did entertain me freely, . . . gave me such things that were necessary for my journey, and bid me hope to the end. . . . Other brunts I also look for; but this I have resolved on, to wit, to run when I can, to go when I cannot run, and to creep when I cannot go. As to the main, I thank Him that loves me, I am fixed; my way is before me, my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though I am as you see.'

"And behold — Mr. Ready-to-halt came by with his crutches in his hand, and he was also going on Pilgrimage."

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

AND if we tie it with the amber-colored ribbon, then every time I have it out to put in a new Poor Thing, I shall remember how very naughty I was, and how I spoilt your poetry."

"Then we 'll certainly tie it with something else," said the Master of the House, and he jerked away the ribbon with a gesture as decisive as his words. "Let bygones be bygones. If *I* forget it, *you* need n't remember it!"

"Oh, but, indeed, I ought to remember it; and I do think I *better had* — to remind myself never, never to be so naughty again!"

"Your mother's own son!" muttered the Master of the House; and he added aloud: "Well, I forbid you to remember 't — so there! It 'll be naughty if you do. Here 's some red ribbon. That should please you, as you 're so fond of soldiers."

Leonard and his father were seated side by side at a table in the library. The dog lay at their feet.

They were very busy; the Master of the House working under Leonard's direction, who, issuing his orders from his wheel-chair, was so full of anxiety and importance, that when Lady Jane opened the library-door he knitted his brow and put up one thin little hand, in a comically old-fashioned manner, to deprecate interruption.

"Don't make any disturbance, Mother dear, if you please. Father and I are very much engaged."

"Don't you think, Len, it would be kind to let poor Mother see what we are doing, and tell her about it?"

Leonard pondered an instant.

"Well — I don't mind."

Then, as his mother's arm came round him, he added, impetuously:

"Yes, I should like to. *You* can show, Father dear, and *I'll* do all the explaining."

The Master of the House displayed some sheets of paper, tied with ribbon, which already contained a

good deal of his handiwork, including a finely-illuminated capital L on the title-page.

"It is to be called the Book of Poor Things, Mother dear. We're doing it in bits first; then it will be bound. It's a collection — a collection of Poor Things who've been hurt, like me; or blind, like the organ-tuner; or had their heads — no, not their heads, they could n't go on doing things after that — had their legs or their arms chopped off in battle, and are very good and brave about it, and manage very, very nearly as well as people who have got nothing the matter with them. Father does n't think Poor Things is a good name. He wanted to call it Masters of Fate, because of some poetry. What was it, Father?"

"'Man is man and Master of his Fate,'" quoted the Master of the House.

"Yes, that's it. But I don't understand it so well as Poor Things. They *are* Poor Things, you know, and of course we shall only put in brave Poor Things: not cowardly Poor Things. It was all my idea, only Father is doing the ruling, and printing, and illuminating for me. I thought of it when the Organ-tuner was here."

"The Organ-tuner?"

"Yes, I heard the organ, and I made James carry me in, and put me in the arm-chair close to the organ. And the tuner was tuning, and he looked round, and James said, 'It's the young gentleman,' and the Tuner said, 'Good morning, Sir,' and I said, 'Good

morning, Tuner; go on tuning, please, for I want to see you do it.' And he went on; and he dropped a tin thing, like a big extinguisher, on to the floor; and he got down to look for it, and he felt about in such a funny way that I burst out laughing. I did n't mean to be rude; I could n't help it. And I said, 'Can't you see it? It 's just under the table.' And he said, 'I can't see anything, Sir; I 'm stone blind.' And he said, perhaps I would be kind enough to give it him. And I said I was very sorry, but I had n't got my crutches, and so I could n't get out of my chair without some one to help me. And he was so awfully sorry for me, you can't think! He said he did n't know I was more afflicted than he was; but I was awfully sorry for him, for I 've tried shutting my eyes; and you can bear it just a minute, but then you *must* open them to see again. And I said, 'How can you do anything when you see nothing but blackness all along?' And he says he can do well enough as long as he 's spared the use of his limbs to earn his own livelihood. And I said, 'Are there any more blind men, do you think, that earn their own livelihood? I wish I could earn mine!' And he said, 'There are a good many blind tuners, Sir.' And I said, 'Go on tuning, please: I like to hear you do it.' And he went on, and I did like him so much. Do you know the blind tuner, Mother dear? And don't you like him very much? I think he is just what you think very good, and I think V.C. would think it nearly as brave as a battle to be afflicted and go on

earning your own livelihood when you can see nothing but blackness all along. Poor man!"

"I do think it very good of him, my darling, and very brave."

"I knew you would. And then I thought perhaps there are lots of brave afflicted people — poor things! and perhaps there never was anybody but me who was n't. And I wished I knew their names, and I asked the Tuner his name, and he told me. And then I thought of my book, for a good idea — a collection, you know. And I thought perhaps, by degrees, I might collect three hundred and sixty-five Poor Things, all brave. And so I am making Father rule it like his Diary, and we 've got the Tuner's name down for the First of January; and if you can think of anybody else you must tell me, and if I think they 're afflicted enough and brave enough, I 'll put them in. But I shall have to be rather particular, for we don't want to fill up too fast. Now, Father, I 've done the explaining, so you can show your part. Look, Mother, has n't he ruled it well? There 's only one tiny mess, and it was The Sweep shaking the table with getting up to be patted."

"He has ruled it beautifully. But what a handsome L!"

"Oh, I forget! Wait a minute, Father; the explaining is n't quite finished. What do you think that L stands for, Mother dear?"

"For Leonard, I suppose."

"No, no! What fun! You 're quite wrong. Guess again."

"Is it not the Tuner's name?"

"Oh, no! He 's in the first of January — I told you so. And in plain printing. Father really could n't illuminate three hundred and sixty-five poor things!"

"Of course he could n't. It was silly of me to think so."

"Do you give it up?"

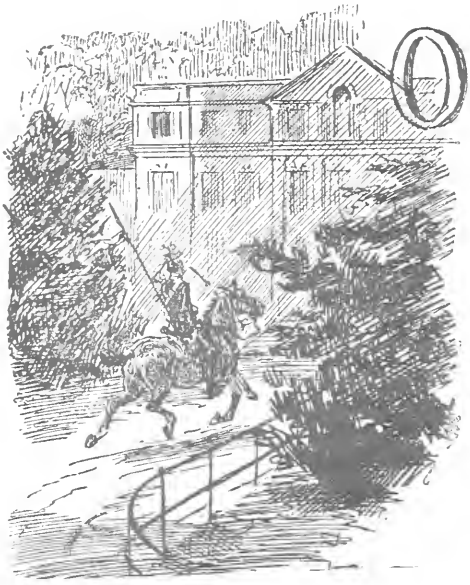
"I must. I cannot guess."

"It 's the beginning of '*Lætus sorte mea.*' Ah, you know now! You ought to have guessed without my telling you. Do you remember? I remember, and I mean to remember. I told Jemima that very night. I said, 'It means Happy with my fate, and in our family we have to be happy with it, whatever sort of a one it is.' For you told me so. And I told the Tuner, and he liked hearing about it very much. And then he went on tuning, and he smiled so when he was listening to the notes, I thought he looked very happy; so I asked him, and he said, Yes, he was always happy when he was meddling with a musical instrument. But I thought, most likely all brave poor things are happy with their fate, even if they can't tune; and I asked Father, and he said, 'Yes,' and so we are putting it into my collection — partly for that, and partly when the coat-of-arms is done, to show that the book belongs to me. Now, Father dear, the explaining is really quite finished this time, and you may do all the rest of the show-off yourself!"

CHAPTER IX.

"St. George! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbors near."

Marmion.



OH, Jemima! Jemima! I know you are very kind, and I do mean not to be impatient; but either you 're telling stories or you're talking nonsense, and that 's a fact. How can you say that that blue stuff is a beautiful match, and will wash the exact color, and that you 're sure I shall like it when it 's made up with a cord and tassels, when it 's *not* the blue I want, and when you *know* the men in hospital have n't any tassels to their

dressing-gowns at all! You 're as bad as that horrid shopman who made me so angry. If I had not been obliged to be good, I should have liked to hit him hard with my crutch, when he kept on saying he knew I should prefer a shawl-pattern lined with crimson, if I would let him send one. Oh, here comes Father! Now, that 's right; he 'll know. Father dear, *is* this blue pattern the same color as that?"

"Certainly not. But what 's the matter, my child?"

"It 's about my dressing-gown; and I do get so tired about it, because people will talk nonsense, and won't speak the truth, and won't believe I know what I want myself. Now, I 'll tell you what I want. Do you know the Hospital Lines?"

"In the Camp? Yes."

"And you 've seen all the invalids walking about in blue dressing-gowns and little red ties?"

"Yes. Charming bits of color."

"Hurrah! that 's just it! Now, Father dear, if you wanted a dressing-gown exactly like that — *would* you have one made of this?"

"Not if I knew it! Crude, coarse, staring — please don't wave it in front of my eyes, unless you want to make me feel like a bull with a red rag before him!"

"Oh, Father dear, you *are* sensible! (Jemima, throw this pattern away, please!) But you 'd have felt far worse if you 'd seen the shawl-pattern lined with crimson. Oh, I do wish I could have been a bull that was n't obliged to be *lætus* for half a minute, to give that shopman just one toss! But I believe

the best way to do will be as O'Reilly says — get Uncle Henry to buy me a real one out of store, and have it made smaller for me. And I should like it 'out of store.'"

From this conversation it will be seen that Leonard's military bias knew no change. Had it been less strong it could only have served to intensify the pain of the heartbreaking associations which anything connected with the troops now naturally raised in his parents' minds. But it was a sore subject that fairly healed itself.

The Camp had proved a more cruel neighbor than the Master of the House had ever imagined in his forebodings; but it also proved a friend. For if the high, ambitious spirit, the ardent imagination, the vigorous will, which fired the boy's fancy for soldiers and soldier-life, had thus led to his calamity, they found in that sympathy with men of hardihood and lives of discipline, not only an interest that never failed and that lifted the sufferer out of himself, but a constant incentive to those virtues of courage and patience for which he struggled with touching conscientiousness.

Then, without disparagement to the earnestness of his efforts to be good, it will be well believed that his parents did their best to make goodness easy to him. His vigorous individuality still swayed the plans of the household, and these came to be regulated by those of the Camp to a degree which half annoyed and half amused its Master.

The *Asholt Gazette* was delivered as regularly as the *Times*; but on special occasions, the arrangements for which were only known the night before, O'Reilly, or some other Orderly, might be seen wending his way up the Elm Avenue by breakfast time, "with Colonel Jones' compliments, and the Orders of the Day for the young gentleman." And so many were the military displays at which Leonard contrived to be present, that the associations of pleasure and alleviation with Parades and Manœuvres came at last almost to blot out the associations of pain connected with that fatal Field Day.

He drove about a great deal, either among air-cushions in the big carriage or in a sort of perambulator of his own, which was all too easily pushed by any one, and by the side of which The Sweep walked slowly and contentedly, stopping when Leonard stopped, wagging his tail when Leonard spoke, and keeping sympathetic step to the invalid's pace with four sinewy black legs, which were young enough and strong enough to have ranged for miles over the heather hills and never felt fatigue. A true Dog Friend!

What the Master of the House pleasantly called "Our Military Mania," seemed to have reached its climax during certain July manœuvres of the regiments stationed at Asholt, and of additional troops who lay out under canvas in the surrounding country.

Into this mimic campaign Leonard threw himself heart and soul. His camp friends furnished him

with early information of the plans for each day, so far as the generals of the respective forces allowed them to get wind, and with an energy that defied his disabilities he drove about after "the armies," and then scrambled on his crutches to points of vantage where the carriage could not go.

And the Master of the House went with him.

The house itself seemed soldier-bewitched. Orderlies were as plentiful as rooks among the elm-trees. The staff clattered in and out, and had luncheon at unusual hours, and strewed the cedar-wood hall with swords and cocked hats, and made low bows over Lady Jane's hand, and rode away among the trees.

These were weeks of pleasure and enthusiasm for Leonard, and of not less delight for The Sweep; but they were followed by an illness.

That Leonard bore his sufferings better helped to conceal the fact that they undoubtedly increased; and he over-fatigued himself and got a chill, and had to go to bed, and took The Sweep to bed with him.

And it was when he could play at no "soldier-game," except that of "being in hospital," that he made up his mind to have a blue dressing-gown of regulation color and pattern, and met with the difficulties aforesaid in carrying out his whim.

CHAPTER X.

"Fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.'

King John, Act iii.

LONG years after they were written, a bundle of letters lay in the drawer of a cabinet in Lady Jane's morning-room, carefully kept, each in its own envelope, and every envelope stamped with the post-mark of Asholt Camp.

They were in Leonard's handwriting. A childish hand, though good for his age, but round and clear as his own speech.

After much coaxing and considering, and after consulting with the doctors, Leonard had been al-

lowed to visit the Barrack Master and his wife. After his illness he was taken to the sea-side, which he liked so little that he was bribed to stay there by the promise that, if the Doctor would allow it, he should, on his return, have the desire of his heart, and be permitted to live for a time "in Camp," and sleep in a hut.

The Doctor gave leave. Small quarters would neither mar nor mend an injured spine; and if he felt the lack of space and luxuries to which he was accustomed, he would then be content to return home.

The Barrack Master's hut only boasted one spare bed-chamber for visitors, and when Leonard and his dog were in it there was not much elbow-room. A sort of cupboard was appropriated for the use of Jemima, and Lady Jane drove constantly into Camp to see her son. Meanwhile he proved a very good correspondent, as his letters will show for themselves.

LETTER I.

"BARRACK MASTER'S HUT,
"*The Camp, Asholt.*

"MY DEAR, DEAR MOTHER, —

"I hope you are quite well, and Father also. I am very happy, and so is The Sweep. He tried sleeping on my bed last night, but there was not room, though I gave him as much as ever I could. So he slept on the floor. It is a camp bed, and folds up, if you want it to. We have nothing like it. It belonged to a real General. The General

is dead. Uncle Henry bought it at his sale. You always have a sale if you die, and your brother-officers buy your things to pay your debts. Sometimes you get them very cheap. I mean the things.

"The drawers fold up, too. I mean the chest of drawers, and so does the wash-hand-stand. It goes into the corner, and takes up very little room. There could n't be a bigger one, or the door would not open — the one that leads into the kitchen. The other door leads into a passage. I like having the kitchen next me. You can hear everything. You can hear O'Reilly come in the morning, and I call to him to open my door, and he says, 'Yes, sir,' and opens it, and lets The Sweep out for a run, and takes my boots. And you can hear the tap of the boiler running with your hot water before she brings it, and you can smell the bacon frying for breakfast.

"Aunt Adelaide was afraid I should not like being woke up so early, but I do. I waked a good many times. First with the gun. It 's like a very short thunder, and shakes you. And then the bugles play. Father would like *them!* And then right away in the distance — trumpets. And the air comes in so fresh at the window. And you pull up the clothes, if they 've fallen off you, and go to sleep again. Mine had all fallen off, except the sheet, and The Sweep was lying on them. Was n't it clever of him to have found them in the dark? If I can't keep them on, I 'm going to have campaigning blankets; they are sewed up like a bag, and you get into them.

"What do you think I found on my coverlet when I went to bed? A real, proper, blue dressing-gown, and a crimson tie! It came out of store, and Aunt Adelaide made it smaller herself. Was n't it kind of her?

"I have got it on now. Presently I am going to dress properly, and O'Reilly is going to wheel me down to the stores. It will be great fun. My cough has been pretty bad, but it 's no worse than it was at home.

"There 's a soldier come for the letters, and they are obliged to be ready.

"I am, your loving and dutiful son,

"LEONARD.

"P.S. — Uncle Henry says his father was very old-fashioned, and he always liked him to put 'Your dutiful son,' so I put it to you.

"All these crosses mean kisses, Jemima told me."

LETTER II.

". . . I WENT to church yesterday, though it was only Tuesday. I need not have gone unless I liked, but I liked. There is service every evening in the Iron Church, and Aunt Adelaide goes, and so do I, and sometimes Uncle Henry. There are not very many people go, but they behave very well, what there are. You can't tell what the officers belong to in the afternoon, because they are in plain clothes; but Aunt Adelaide thinks they were Royal Engineers, except one Commissariat one, and an A. D. C., and the Colonel of a regiment that marched in last week. You can't tell what the ladies belong to unless you know them.

"You can always tell the men. Some were Barrack Sergeants, and some were Sappers, and there were two Gunners, and an Army Hospital Corps, and a Cavalry Corporal who came all the way from the barracks, and sat near the door, and said very long prayers to himself at the end. And there

were some schoolmasters, and a man with gray hair and no uniform, who mends the roofs and teaches in the Sunday School, and I forget the rest. Most of the choir are Sappers and Commissariat men, and the boys are soldiers' sons. The Sappers and Commissariat belong to our Brigade.

"There is no Sexton to our Church. He 's a Church Orderly. He has put me a kind of a back in the corner of one of the Officers' Seats, to make me comfortable in church, and a very high footstool. I mean to go every day, and as often as I can on Sundays, without getting too much tired.

"You can go very often on Sunday mornings if you want to. They begin at eight o'clock, and go on till luncheon. There 's a fresh band, and a fresh chaplain, and a fresh sermon, and a fresh congregation every time. Those are Parade Services. The others are Voluntary Services, and I thought that meant for the Volunteers; but O'Reilly laughed, and said, 'No, it only means that there 's no occasion to go to them at all'—he means unless you like. But then I do like. There 's no sermon on week days. Uncle Henry is very glad, and so am I. I think it might make my back ache.

"I am afraid, dear Mother, that you won't be able to understand all I write to you from the Camp; but if you don't, you must ask me and I 'll explain.

"When I say *our quarters*, remember I mean our hut; and when I say *rations* it means bread and meat, and I 'm not quite sure if it means coals and candles as well. But I think I'll make you a Dictionary if I can get a ruled book from the Canteen. It would make this letter too much to go for a penny if I put all the words in I know. Cousin George tells me them when he comes in after mess. He told me the Camp name for Iron Church is Tin Tabernacle; but Aunt

Adelaide says it 's not, and I 'm not to call it so, so I don't. But that 's what he says.

"I like Cousin George very much. I like his uniform. He is very thin, particularly round the waist. Uncle Henry is very stout, particularly round the waist. Last night George came in after mess, and two other officers out of his regiment came too. And then another officer came in. And they chaffed Uncle Henry, and Uncle Henry does n't mind. And the other officer said, 'Three times round a Subaltern — once round a Barrack Master.' And so they got Uncle Henry's sword-belt out of his dressing-room, and George and his friends stood back to back, and held up their jackets out of the way, and the other officer put the belt right round them, all three, and told them not to laugh. And Aunt Adelaide said, 'Oh!' and 'you 'll hurt them.' And he said, 'Not a bit of it.' And he buckled it. So that shows. It was great fun.

"I am, your loving and dutiful Son,

"LEONARD.

"P.S. — The other officer is an Irish officer — at least, I think so, but I can't be quite sure, because he won't speak the truth. I said, 'You talk rather like O'Reilly; are you an Irish soldier?' And he said, 'I'd the misfortune to be quartered for six months in the County Cork, and it was the ruin of my French accent.' So I said, 'Are you a Frenchman?' and they all laughed, so I don't know.

"P.S. No. 2. — My back has been very bad, but Aunt Adelaide says I have been very good. This is not meant for swagger, but to let you know.

("*Swagger* means boasting. If you 're a soldier, swagger is the next worst thing to running away.)

"P.S. No. 3. — I know another officer now. I like him. He is a D. A. Q. M. G. I would let you guess that if you could ever find it out, but you could n't. It means Deputy-Assistant-Quarter-Master-General. He is not so grand as you would think; a plain General is really grander. Uncle Henry says so, and he knows."

LETTER III.

". . . I HAVE seen V. C. I have seen him twice. I have seen his cross. The first time was at the Sports. Aunt Adelaide drove me there in the pony carriage. We stopped at the Enclosure. The Enclosure is a rope, with a man taking tickets. The Sports are inside; so is the tent, with tea; so are the ladies, in awfully pretty dresses, and the officers walking round them.

"There 's great fun outside, at least, I should think so. There 's a crowd of people, and booths, and a skeleton man. I saw his picture. I should like to have seen him, but Aunt Adelaide did n't want to, so I tried to be *lætus* without.

"When we got to the Enclosure there was a gentleman taking his ticket, and when he turned round he was V. C. Was n't it funny? So he came back and said, 'Why, here 's my little friend!' And he said, 'You must let me carry you.' And so he did, and put me among the ladies. But the ladies got him a good deal. He went and talked to lots of them, but I tried to be *lætus* without him; and then Cousin George came, and lots of others, and then the V. C. came back and showed me things about the Sports.

"Sports are very hard work: they make you so hot and tired; but they are very nice to watch. The races were great fun, particularly when they fell in the water, and the

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men in sacks who hop, and the blindfolded men with wheelbarrows. Oh, they were so funny! They kept wheeling into each other, all except one, and he went wheeling and wheeling right away up the field, all by himself and all wrong! I did laugh.

"But what I liked best were the tent-pegging men, and most best of all, the Tug-of-War.

"The Irish officer did tent-pegging. He has the dearest pony you ever saw. He is so fond of it, and it is so fond of him. He talks to it in Irish, and it understands him. He cut off the Turk's head, — not a real Turk, a sham Turk, and not a whole one, only the head stuck on a pole.

"The Tug-of-War was splendid! Two sets of men pulling at a rope to see which is strongest. They did pull! They pulled so hard, both of them, with all their might and main, that we thought it must be a drawn battle. But at last one set pulled the other over, and then there was such a noise that my head ached dreadfully, and the Irish officer carried me into the tent and gave me some tea. And then we went home.

"The next time I saw V. C. was on Sunday at Parade Service. He is on the Staff, and wears a cocked hat. He came in with the General and the A. D. C., who was at church on Tuesday, and I was so glad to see him.

"After church, everybody went about saying 'Good morning,' and 'How hot it was in church!' and V. C. helped me with my crutches, and showed me his cross. And the General came up and spoke to me, and I saw his medals, and he asked how you were, and I said, 'Quite well, thank you.' And then he talked to a lady with some little boys dressed like sailors. She said how hot it was in church, and he said, 'I thought the roof was coming off with that last hymn.'

And she said, 'My little boys call it the Tug-of-War Hymn; they are very fond of it.' And he said, 'The men seem very fond of it.' And he turned round to an officer I didn't know, and said, 'They ran away from you that last verse but one.' And the officer said, 'Yes, sir, they always do; so I stop the organ and let them have it their own way.'

"I asked Aunt Adelaide, 'Does that officer play the organ?' And she said, 'Yes, and he trains the choir. He's coming in to supper.' So he came. If the officers stay sermon on Sunday evenings, they are late for mess. So the Chaplain stops after Prayers, and anybody that likes to go out before sermon can. If they stay sermon, they go to supper with some of the married officers instead of dining at mess.

"So he came. I liked him awfully. He plays like Father, only I think he can play more difficult things.

"He says, 'Tug-of-War Hymn' is the very good name for that hymn, because the men are so fond of it they all sing, and the ones at the bottom of the church 'drag over' the choir and the organ.

"He said, 'I've talked till I'm black in the face, and all to no purpose. It would try the patience of a saint.' So I said, 'Are you a saint?' And he laughed and said, 'No, I'm afraid not; I'm only a kapellmeister.' So I call him 'Kapellmeister.' I do like him.

"I do like the Tug-of-War Hymn. It begins, 'The Son of God goes forth to war.' That's the one. But we have it to a tune of our own, on Saints' Days. The verse the men tug with is, 'A noble army, men and boys.' I think they like it, because it's about the army; and so do I.

"I am, your loving and dutiful son,

"LEONARD.

"P.S. — I call the ones with cocked hats and feathers, 'Cockatoos.' There was another Cockatoo who walked away with the General. Not very big. About the bigness of the stuffed General in that Pawnbroker's window; and I do think he had quite as many medals. I wanted to see them. I wish I had. He looked at me. He had a very gentle face; but I was afraid of it. Was I a coward?

"You remember what these crosses are, don't you? I told you."

LETTER IV.

"THIS is a very short letter. It 's only to ask you to send my book of Poor Things by the Orderly who takes this, unless you are quite sure you are coming to see me to-day.

"A lot of officers are collecting for me, and there 's one in the Engineers can print very well, so he 'll put them in.

"A Colonel with only one arm dined here yesterday. You can't think how well he manages, using first his knife and then his fork, and talking so politely all the time. He has all kinds of dodges, so as not to give trouble and do everything for himself. I mean to put him in.

"I wrote to Cousin Alan, and asked him to collect for me. I like writing letters, and I do like getting them. Uncle Henry says he hates a lot of posts in the day. I hate posts when there 's nothing for me. I like all the rest.

"Cousin Alan wrote back by return. He says he can only think of the old chap, whose legs were cut off in battle:

'And when his legs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumps!'

It was very brave, if it 's true. Do you think it is? He did not tell me his name.

"Your loving and dutiful son,

"LEONARD.

"P.S. — I am *lætus sorte mea*, and so is The Sweep."

LETTER V.

"THIS letter is not about a Poor Thing. It 's about a saint — a soldier saint — which I and the Chaplain think nearly the best kind. His name was Martin, he got to be a Bishop in the end, but when he first enlisted he was only a catechumen. Do you know what a catechumen is, dear Mother? Perhaps if you 're not quite so high church as the engineer I told you of, who prints so beautifully, you may not know. It means when you 've been born a heathen, and are going to be a Christian, only you 've not yet been baptized. The engineer has given me a picture of him, St. Martin I mean, and now he has printed underneath it, in beautiful thick black letters that you can hardly read if you don't know what they are, and the very particular words in red, 'Martin — yet but a Catechumen!' He can illuminate too, though not quite so well as Father, he is very high-church, and I 'm high-church too, and so is our Chaplain, but he is broad as well. The engineer thinks he 's rather too broad, but Uncle Henry and Aunt Adelaide think he 's quite perfect, and so do I, and so does everybody else. He comes in sometimes, but not very often because he 's so busy. He came the other night because I wanted to confess. What I wanted to confess was that I had laughed in church. He is a very big man, and he has a very big surplice, with a great lot of gathers

behind, which makes my engineer very angry, because it 's the wrong shape, and he preaches splendidly, the Chaplain I mean, straight out of his head, and when all the soldiers are listening he swings his arms about, and the surplice gets in his way, and he catches hold of it, and oh! Mother dear, I must tell you what it reminded me of. When I was very little, and Father used to tie a knot in his big pocket-handkerchief and put his first finger into it to make a head that nodded, and wind the rest round his hand, and stick out his thumb and another finger for arms, and do the 'Yea-verily-man' to amuse you and me. It was last Sunday, and a most splendid sermon, but his stole got round under his ear, and his sleeves did look just like the Yea-verily-man, and I tried not to look, and then I caught the Irish officer's eye and he twinkled, and then I laughed, because I remembered his telling Aunt Adelaide 'That 's the grandest old Padrè that ever got up into a pulpit, but did ye ever see a man get so mixed up with his clothes?' I was very sorry when I laughed, so I settled I would confess, for my engineer thinks you ought always to confess, so when our Chaplain came in after dinner on Monday, I confessed, but he only laughed, till he broke down Aunt Adelaide's black and gold chair. He is too big for it, really. Aunt Adelaide never lets Uncle Henry sit on it. So he was very sorry, and Aunt Adelaide begged him not to mind, and then in came my engineer in war-paint (if you look out *war-paint* in the Canteen Book I gave you, you 'll see what it means). He was in war-paint because he was Orderly Officer for the evening, and he 'd got his sword under one arm, and the picture under the other, and his short cloak on to keep it dry, because it was raining. He made the frame himself; he can make Oxford frames quite well, and he 's going to teach me

how to. Then I said, 'Who is it?' so he told me, and now I 'm going to tell you, in case you don't know. Well, St. Martin was born in Hungary, in the year 316. His father and mother were heathens, but when he was about my age he made up his mind he would be a Christian. His father and mother were so afraid of his turning into a monk, that as soon as he was old enough they enlisted him in the army, hoping that would cure him of wanting to be a Christian, but it did n't — Martin wanted to be a Christian just as much as ever; still he got interested with his work and his comrades, and he dawdled on only a Catechumen, and did n't make full profession and get baptized. One winter his corps was quartered at Amiens, and on a very bitter night, near the gates, he saw a half-naked beggar shivering with the cold. (I asked my engineer, 'Was he Orderly Officer for the evening?' but he said, 'More likely on patrol duty, with some of his comrades.' However, he says he won't be sure, for Martin was Tribune, which is very nearly a Colonel, two years afterwards, he knows.) When Martin saw the Beggar at the gate, he pulled out his big military cloak, and drew his sword, and cut it in half, and wrapped half of it round the poor Beggar to keep him warm. I know you 'll think him very kind, but wait a bit, that 's not all. Next night when Martin the soldier was asleep he had a vision. Did you ever have a vision? I wish I could! This was Martin's vision. He saw Christ our Lord in Heaven, sitting among the shining hosts, and wearing over one shoulder half a military cloak, and as Martin saw Him he heard Him say, 'Behold the mantle given to Me by Martin — yet but a Catechumen!' After that vision he did n't wait any longer; he was baptized at once.

"Mother dear, I 've told you this quite truthfully, but I can't tell it you so *splendidly* as my engineer did, standing

with his back to the fire and holding out his cape, and drawing his sword to show me how Martin divided his cloak with the beggar. Aunt Adelaide is n't afraid of swords, she is too used to them, but she says she thinks soldiers do things in huts they would never think of doing in big rooms, just to show how neatly they can manage, without hurting anything. The Chaplain broke the chair, but then he is n't exactly a soldier, and the D. A. Q. M. G. that I told you of, comes in sometimes and says, 'I beg your pardon, Mrs. Jones, but I must,' — and puts both his hands on the end of the sofa, and lifts his body till he gets his legs sticking straight out. They are very long legs, and he and the sofa go nearly across the room, but he never kicks anything, it 's a kind of athletics; and there 's another officer who comes in at one door and Catherine-wheels right across to the farthest corner, and he is over six foot, too, but they never break anything. We do laugh.

"I wish you could have seen my engineer doing St. Martin. He had to go directly afterwards, and then the Chaplain came and stood in front of me, on the hearth-rug, in the firelight, just where my engineer had been standing, and he took up the picture, and looked at it. So I said, 'Do you know about St. Martin?' and he said he did, and he said, 'One of the greatest of those many Soldiers of the Cross who have also fought under earthly banners.' Then he put down the picture, and got hold of his elbow with his hand, as if he was holding his surplice out of the way, and said, 'Great, as well as good, for this reason: he was one of those rare souls to whom the counsels of God are clear, not to the utmost of the times in which he lived — but in advance of those times. Such men are not always popular, nor even largely successful in their day, but the light they hold lightens more generations

of this naughty world, than the pious tapers of commoner men. You know that Martin the Catechumen became Martin the Saint — do you know that Martin the Soldier became Martin the Bishop? — and that in an age of credulity and fanaticism, that man of GOD discredited some relics very popular with the pious in his diocese, and proved and exposed them to be those of an executed robber. Later in life it is recorded of Martin, Bishop of Tours, that he lifted his voice in protest against persecutions for religion, and the punishment of heretics. In the nineteenth century we are little able to judge, how great must have been the faith of that man in the GOD of truth and of love.' It was like a little sermon, and I think this is exactly how he said it, for I got Aunt Adelaide to write it out for me this morning, and she remembers sermons awfully well. I 've been looking St. Martin out in the calendar; his day is the 11th of November. He is not a Collect, Epistle, and Gospel Saint, only one of the Black Letter ones; but the 11th of November is going to be on a Sunday this year, and I am so glad, for I 've asked our Chaplain if we may have the Tug-of-War Hymn for St. Martin — and he has given leave.

"It 's a long way off; I wish it came sooner. So now, Mother dear, you have time to make your arrangements as you like, but you see that whatever happens, *I* must be in Camp on St. Martin's Day.

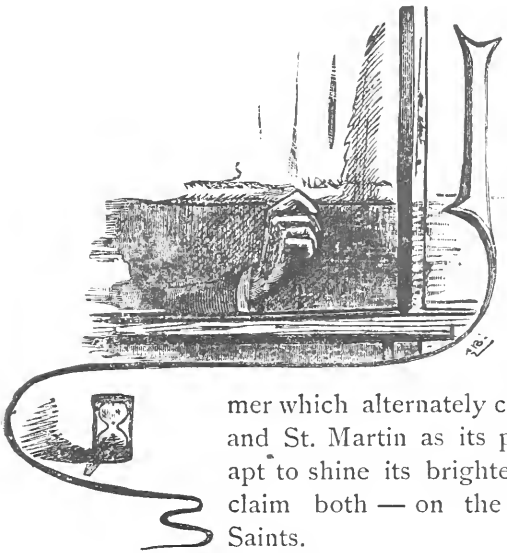
"Your loving and dutiful son,

"LEONARD."

CHAPTER XI.

"I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth — !"

1 *Tim.* iv. 7.



T was Sunday. Sunday, the tenth of November — St. Martin's Day.

Though it was in November, a summer day. A day of that Little Summer which alternately claims St. Luke and St. Martin as its patrons, and is apt to shine its brightest when it can claim both — on the feast of All Saints.

Sunday in camp. With curious points of likeness and unlikeness to English Sundays elsewhere. Like in that general aspect of tidiness and quiet, of gravity and pause, which betrays that a hard-working and very practical people have thought good to keep much of the Sabbath with its Sunday. Like, too, in

the little groups of children, gay in Sunday best, and grave with Sunday books, trotting to Sunday school.

Unlike, in that to see all the men about the place washed and shaved is not, among soldiers, peculiar to Sunday. Unlike, also, in a more festal feeling produced by the gay gatherings of men and officers on Church Parade (far distant be the day when Parade Services shall be abolished!), and by the exhilarating sounds of the Bands with which each regiment marched from its parade-ground to the church.

Here and there small detachments might be met making their way to the Roman Catholic church in camp, or to places of worship of various denominations in the neighboring town; and on Blind Baby's Parade (where he was prematurely crushing his Sunday frock with his drum-basket in ecstatic sympathy with the bands), a corporal of exceptional views was parading himself and two privates of the same denomination, before marching the three of them to their own peculiar prayer-meeting.

The Brigade for the Iron Church paraded early (the sunshine and sweet air seemed to promote alacrity). And after the men were seated their officers still lingered outside, chatting with the ladies and the Staff, as these assembled by degrees, and sunning themselves in the genial warmth of St. Martin's Little Summer.

The V. C. was talking with the little boys in sailor suits and their mother, when the officer who played the organ came towards them.

"Good morning, Kapellmeister!" said two or three voices.

Nicknames were common in the camp, and this one had been rapidly adopted.

"Ye look cloudy this fine morning, Kapellmeister!" cried the Irish officer. "Got the toothache?"

The Kapellmeister shook his head, and forced a smile which rather intensified than diminished the gloom of a countenance which did not naturally lend itself to lines of levity. Was he not a Scotchman and also a musician? His lips smiled in answer to the chaff, but his sombre eyes were fixed on the V. C. They had — as some eyes have — an odd, summoning power, and the V. C. went to meet him.

When he said, "I was in there this morning," the V. C.'s eyes followed the Kapellmeister's to the Barrack Master's hut, and his own face fell.

"He wants the Tug-of-War Hymn," said the Kapellmeister.

"He's not coming to church?"

"Oh, no; but he's set his heart on hearing the Tug-of-War Hymn through his bedroom window; and it seems the Chaplain has promised we shall have it to-day. It's a most amazing thing," added the Kapellmeister, shooting out one arm with a gesture common to him when oppressed by an idea, — "it's a *most* amazing thing! For I think, if I were in my grave, that hymn — as these men bolt with it — might make me turn in my place of rest; but it's the last thing I should care to hear if I were ill in bed!

However, he wants it, poor lad, and he asked me to ask you if you would turn outside when it begins, and sing so that he can hear your voice and the words."

"Oh, he can never hear me over there!"

"He can hear you fast enough! It's quite close. He begged me to ask you, and I was to say it's his last Sunday."

There was a pause. The V. C. looked at the little "Officers' Door," which was close to his usual seat, which always stood open in summer weather, and half in half out of which men often stood in the crush of a Parade Service. There was no difficulty in the matter except his own intense dislike to anything approaching to display. Also he had become more attached than he could have believed possible to the gallant-hearted child whose worship of him had been flattery as delicate as it was sincere. It was no small pain to know that the boy lay dying — a pain he would have preferred to bear in silence.

"Is he very much set upon it?"

"Absolutely."

"Is she — is Lady Jane there?"

"All of them. He can't last the day out."

"When will it be sung — that hymn, I mean?"

"I've put it on after the third Collect."

"All right."

The V. C. took up his sword and went to his seat, and the Kapellmeister took up his and went to the organ.

. . . . . .

In the Barrack Master's Hut my hero lay dying. His mind was now absolutely clear, but during the night it had wandered — wandered in a delirium that was perhaps some solace of his sufferings, for he had believed himself to be a soldier on active service, bearing the brunt of battle and the pain of wounds; and when fever consumed him, he thought it was the heat of India that parched his throat and scorched his skin, and called again and again in noble raving to imaginary comrades to keep up heart and press forward.

About four o'clock he sank into stupor, and the Doctor forced Lady Jane to go and lie down, and the Colonel took his wife away to rest also.

At Gun-fire Leonard opened his eyes. For some minutes he gazed straight ahead of him, and the Master of the House, who sat by his bedside, could not be sure whether he were still delirious or no; but when their eyes met he saw that Leonard's senses had returned to him, and kissed the wan little hand that was feeling about for The Sweep's head in silence that he almost feared to break.

Leonard broke in by saying, "When did you bring Uncle Rupert to Camp, Father dear?"

"Uncle Rupert is at home, my darling; and you are in Uncle Henry's hut."

"I know I am; and so is Uncle Rupert. He is at the end of the room there. Can't you see him?"

"No, Len; I only see the wall, with your text on it that poor old Father did for you."

"My 'Goodly heritage,' you mean? I can't see that now. Uncle Rupert is in front of it. I thought you put him there. Only he's out of his frame, and —it's very odd!"

"What's odd, my darling?"

"Some one has wiped away all the tears from his eyes."

. . . . . .

"Hymn two hundred and sixty-three: 'Fight the good fight of faith.'"

The third Collect was just ended, and a prolonged and somewhat irregular Amen was dying away among the Choir, who were beginning to feel for their hymn-books.

The lack of precision, the "dropping shots" style in which that *Amen* was delivered, would have been more exasperating to the Kapellmeister, if his own attention had not been for the moment diverted by anxiety to know if the V. C. remembered that the time had come.

As the Chaplain gave out the hymn, the Kapellmeister gave one glance of an eye, as searching as it was sombre, round the corner of that odd little curtain which it is the custom to hang behind an organist; and this sufficing to tell him that the V. C. had not forgotten, he drew out certain very vocal stops, and bending himself to manual and pedal, gave forth the popular melody of the "Tug-of-War" hymn with a precision indicative of a resolution to have it sung in strict time, or know the reason why.

And as nine hundred and odd men rose to their feet with some clatter of heavy boots and accoutrements the V. C. turned quietly out of the crowded church, and stood outside upon the steps, bare-headed in the sunshine of St. Martin's Little Summer, and with the tiniest of hymn-books between his fingers and thumb.

Circumstances had made a soldier of the V. C., but by nature he was a student. When he brought the little hymn-book to his eyes to get a mental grasp of the hymn before he began to sing it, he committed the first four lines to an intelligence sufficiently trained to hold them in remembrance for the brief time that it would take to sing them. Involuntarily his active brain did more, and was crossed by a critical sense of the crude, barbaric taste of childhood, and a wonder what consolation the suffering boy could find in these gaudy lines: —

> "The Son of GOD goes forth to war,
> A kingly crown to gain;
> His blood-red banner streams afar:
> Who follows in His train?"

But when he brought the little hymn-book to his eyes to take in the next four lines, they startled him with the revulsion of a sudden sympathy; and lifting his face towards the Barrack Master's Hut, he sang — as he rarely sang in drawing-rooms, even words the most felicitous to melodies the most sweet — sang not only to the delight of dying ears, but so that the Kapellmeister himself heard him, and smiled as he heard: —

"Who best can drink His cup of woe
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears His cross below,
He follows in His train."

. . . . . .

On each side of Leonard's bed, like guardian angels, knelt his father and mother. At his feet lay The Sweep, who now and then lifted a long, melancholy nose and anxious eyes.

At the foot of the bed stood the Barrack Master. He had taken up this position at the request of the Master of the House, who had avoided any further allusion to Leonard's fancy that their Naseby Ancestor had come to Asholt Camp, but had begged his big brother-in-law to stand there and blot out Uncle Rupert's Ghost with his substantial body.

But whether Leonard perceived the *ruse*, forgot Uncle Rupert, or saw him all the same, by no word or sign did he ever betray.

Near the window sat Aunt Adelaide, with her Prayer-book, following the service in her own orderly and pious fashion, sometimes saying a prayer aloud at Leonard's bidding, and anon replying to his oft-repeated inquiry: "Is it the third Collect yet, Aunty dear?"

She had turned her head, more quickly than usual, to speak, when, clear and strenuous on vocal stops, came the melody of the "Tug-of-War" hymn.

"There! There it is! Oh, good Kapellmeister! Mother dear, please go to the window and see if V. C.

is there, and wave your hand to him. Father dear, lift me up a little, please. Ah, now I hear him! Good V. C.! I don't believe you 'll sing better than that when you 're promoted to be an angel. Are the men singing pretty loud? May I have a little of that stuff to keep me from coughing, Mother dear? You know I am not impatient; but I do hope, please GOD, I sha'n't die till I 've just heard them *tug* that verse once more!"

. . . . . .

The sight of Lady Jane had distracted the V. C.'s thoughts from the hymn. He was singing mechanically, when he became conscious of some increasing pressure and irregularity in the time. Then he remembered what it was. The soldiers were beginning to tug.

In a moment more the organ stopped, and the V. C. found himself, with over three hundred men at his back, singing without accompaniment, and in unison—

> "A noble army — men and boys,
> The matron and the maid,
> Around their Saviour's throne rejoice,
> In robes of white arrayed."

The Kapellmeister conceded that verse to the shouts of the congregation; but he invariably reclaimed control over the last.

Even now, as the men paused to take breath after their "tug," the organ spoke again, softly, but seraphically, and clearer and sweeter above the voices be-

hind him rose the voice of the V. C., singing to his little friend —

> "They climbed the steep ascent of Heaven,
> Through peril, toil, and pain" —

The men sang on; but the V. C. stopped, as if he had been shot. For a man's hand had come to the Barrack Master's window and pulled the white blind down.

CHAPTER XII.

"He that hath found some fledged-bird's nest may know
At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown." — *Henry Vaughan.*

TRUE to its character as an emblem of human life, the Camp stands on, with all its little manners and customs, whilst the men who garrison it pass rapidly away.

Strange as the vicissitudes of a whole generation elsewhere, are the changes and chances that a few years bring to those who were stationed there together.

To what unforeseen celebrity (or to a dropping out of one's life and even hearsay that once seemed quite as little likely) do one's old neighbors sometimes come! They seem to pass in a few drill seasons as other men pass by lifetimes. Some to foolishness and forgetfulness, and some to fame. This old acquaintance to unexpected glory; that dear friend — alas! — to the grave. And some — GOD speed them! — to the world's end and back, following the drum till it leads them Home again, with familiar faces little changed — with boys and girls, perchance, very greatly changed — and with hearts not changed at all. Can the last parting do much to hurt such friendships between good souls, who have so long learnt to say farewell; to love in absence, to trust through silence, and to have faith in reunion?

The Barrack Master's appointment was an unusually permanent one; and he and his wife lived on in Asholt Camp, and saw regiments come and go, as O'Reilly had prophesied, and threw out additional rooms and bow-windows, and took in more garden, and kept a cow on a bit of Government grass beyond the stores, and — with the man who did the roofs, the church orderly, and one or two other public characters — came to be reckoned among the oldest inhabitants.

George went away pretty soon with his regiment. He was a good, straightforward young fellow, with a dogged devotion to duty, and a certain provincialism of intellect, and general John Bullishness, which he

inherited from his father, who had inherited it from his country forefathers. He inherited equally a certain romantic, instinctive, and immovable high-mindedness, not invariably characteristic of much more brilliant men.

He had been very fond of his little cousin, and Leonard's death was a natural grief to him. The funeral tried his fortitude, and his detestation of "scenes," to the very uttermost.

Like most young men who had the honor to know her, George's devotion to his beautiful and gracious aunt, Lady Jane, had had in it something of the nature of worship; but now he was almost glad he was going away, and not likely to see her face for a long time, because it made him feel miserable to see her, and he objected to feeling miserable both on principle and in practice. His peace of mind was assailed, however, from a wholly unexpected quarter, and one which pursued him even more abroad than at home.

The Barrack Master's son had been shocked by his cousin's death; but the shock was really and truly greater when he discovered, by chance gossip, and certain society indications, that the calamity which left Lady Jane childless had made him his Uncle's presumptive heir. The almost physical disgust which the discovery that he had thus acquired some little social prestige produced in this subaltern of a marching regiment must be hard to comprehend by persons of more imagination and less sturdy independence,

or by scholars in the science of success. But man differs widely from man, and it is true.

He had been nearly two years in Canada when "the English mail" caused him to fling his fur cap into the air with such demonstrations of delight as greatly aroused the curiosity of his comrades, and, as he bolted to his quarters without further explanation than "Good news from home!" a rumor was for some time current that "Jones had come into his fortune."

Safe in his own quarters, he once more applied himself to his mother's letter, and picked up the thread of a passage which ran thus: —

"Your dear father gets very impatient, and I long to be back in my hut again and see after my flowers, which I can trust to no one since O'Reilly took his discharge. The little conservatory is like a new toy to me, but it is very tiny, and your dear father is worse than no use in it, as he says himself. However, I can't leave Lady Jane till she is quite strong. The baby is a noble little fellow and really beautiful — which I know you won't believe, but that's because you know nothing about babies: not as beautiful as Leonard, of course — that could never be — but a fine, healthy, handsome boy, with eyes that do remind one of his darling brother. I know, dear George, how greatly you always did admire and appreciate your Aunt. Not one bit too much, my son. She is the noblest woman I have ever known. We have had a very happy time together, and I pray it may please GOD to spare this child to be the comfort to her that you are and have been to

"Your loving MOTHER."

This was the good news from home that had sent the young subaltern's fur cap into the air, and that now sent him to his desk; the last place where, as a rule, he enjoyed himself. Poor scribe as he was, however, he wrote two letters then and there: one to his mother, and one of impetuous congratulations to his uncle, full of messages to Lady Jane.

The Master of the House read the letter more than once. It pleased him.

In his own way he was quite as unworldly as his nephew, but it was chiefly from a philosophic contempt for many things that worldly folk struggle for, and a connoisseurship in sources of pleasure not purchasable except by the mentally endowed, and not even valuable to George, as he knew. And he was a man of the world, and a somewhat cynical student of character.

After the third reading he took it, smiling, to Lady Jane's morning-room, where she was sitting, looking rather pale, with her fine hair "coming down" over a tea-gown of strange tints of her husband's choosing, and with the new baby lying in her lap.

He shut the door noiselessly, took a footstool to her feet, and kissed her hand.

"You look like a Romney, Jane, — an unfinished Romney, for you are too white. If you've got a headache, you sha'n't hear this letter, which I know you 'd like to hear."

"I see that I should. Canada post-marks. It's George."

"Yes; it 's George. He 's uproariously delighted at the advent of this little chap."

"Oh, I knew he 'd be that. Let me hear what he says."

The Master of the House read the letter. Lady Jane's eyes filled with tears at the tender references to Leonard, but she smiled through them.

"He 's a dear, good fellow."

"He *is* a dear, good fellow. It 's a most *borné* intellect, but excellence itself. And I 'm bound to say," added the Master of the House, driving his hands through the jungle of his hair, "that there is a certain excellence about a soldier when he is a good fellow that seems to be a thing *per se*."

After meditating on this matter for some moments, he sprang up and vigorously rang the bell.

"Jane, you 're terribly white; you can bear nothing. Nurse is to take that brat at once, and I 'm going to carry you into the garden."

Always much given to the collection and care of precious things, and apt also to change his fads and to pursue each with partiality for the moment, the Master of the House had, for some time past, been devoting all his thoughts and his theories to the preservation of a possession not less valuable than the paragon of Chippendale chairs, and much more destructible — he was taking care of his good wife.

Many family treasures are lost for lack of a little timely care and cherishing, and there are living "examples" as rare as most bric-à-brac, and quite as

perishable. Lady Jane was one of them, and after Leonard's death, with no motive for keeping up, she sank into a condition of weakness so profound that it became evident that, unless her failing forces were fostered, she would not long be parted from her son.

Her husband had taken up his poem again, to divert his mind from his own grief; but he left it behind, and took Lady Jane abroad.

Once roused, he brought to the task of coaxing her back to life an intelligence that generally insured the success of his aims, and he succeeded now. Lady Jane got well; out of sheer gratitude, she said.

Leonard's military friends do not forget him. They are accustomed to remember the absent.

With the death of his little friend the V. C. quits these pages. He will be found in the pages of history.

The Kapellmeister is a fine organist, and a few musical members of the congregation, of all ranks, have a knack of lingering after Even-song at the Iron Church to hear him "play away the people." But on the Sunday after Leonard's death the congregation rose and remained *en masse* as the Dead March from Saul spoke in solemn and familiar tones the requiem of a hero's soul.

Blind Baby's father was a Presbyterian, and disapproved of organs, but he was a fond parent, and his blind child had heard tell that the officer who played the organ so grandly was to play the Dead March on the Sabbath evening for the little gentleman that died

on the Sabbath previous, and he was wild to go and hear it. Then the service would be past, and the Kapellmeister was a fellow-Scot, and the house of mourning has a powerful attraction for that serious race, and for one reason or another Corporal Macdonald yielded to the point of saying, "Aweel, if you're a gude bairn, I'll tak ye to the kirk door, and ye may lay your lug at the chink, and hear what ye can."

But when they got there the door was open, and Blind Baby pushed his way through the crowd, as if the organ had drawn him with a rope, straight to the Kapellmeister's side.

It was the beginning of a friendship much to Blind Baby's advantage, which did not end when the child had been sent to a Blind School, and then to a college where he learnt to be a tuner, and "earned his own living."

Poor Jemima fretted so bitterly for the loss of the child she had nursed with such devotion, that there was possibly some truth in O'Reilly's rather complicated assertion that he married her because he could not bear to see her cry.

He took his discharge, and was installed by the Master of the House as lodge-keeper at the gates through which he had so often passed as "a tidy one."

Freed from military restraints, he became a very untidy one indeed, and grew hair in such reckless abundance that he came to look like an ourang-ou-

tang with an unusually restrained figure and exceptionally upright carriage.

He was the best of husbands every day in the year but the seventeenth of March; and Jemima enjoyed herself very much as she boasted to the wives of less handy civilians that "her man was as good as a woman about the house, any day." (Any day, that is, except the seventeenth of March.)

With window-plants cunningly and ornamentally enclosed by a miniature paling and gate, as if the window-sill were a hut garden; with colored tissue-paper fly-catchers made on the principle of barrack-room Christmas decorations; with shelves, brackets, Oxford frames, and other efforts of the decorative joinery of O'Reilly's evenings; with a large, hard sofa, chairs, elbow-chairs, and antimacassars; and with a round table in the middle — the Lodge parlor is not a room to live in, but it is almost bewildering to peep into, and curiously like the shrine of some departed saint, so highly framed are the photographs of Leonard's lovely face, and so numerous are his relics.

The fate of Leonard's dog may not readily be guessed.

The gentle reader would not deem it unnatural were I to chronicle that he died of a broken heart. Failing this excess of sensibility, it seems obvious that he should have attached himself immovably to Lady Jane, and have lived at ease and died full of dignity in his little master's ancestral halls. He did go back there for a short time, but the day after the funeral he

disappeared. When word came to the household that he was missing and had not been seen since he was let out in the morning, the butler put on his hat and hurried off with a beating heart to Leonard's grave.

But The Sweep was not there, dead or alive. He was at that moment going at a sling trot along the dusty road that led into the Camp. Timid persons, imperfectly acquainted with dogs, avoided him; he went so very straight, it looked like hydrophobia; men who knew better, and saw that he was only "on urgent private affairs," chaffed him as they passed, and some with little canes and horseplay waylaid and tried to intercept him. But he was a big dog, and made himself respected, and pursued his way.

His way was to the Barrack Master's hut.

The first room he went into was that in which Leonard died. He did not stay there three minutes. Then he went to Leonard's own room, the little one next to the kitchen, and this he examined exhaustively, crawling under the bed, snuffing at both doors, and lifting his long nose against hope to investigate impossible places, such as the top of the military chest of drawers. Then he got on to the late General's camp bed and went to sleep.

He was awakened by the smell of the bacon frying for breakfast, and he had breakfast with the family. After this he went out, and was seen by different persons at various places in the Camp, the General Parade, the Stores, and the Iron Church, still searching.

He was invited to dinner in at least twenty different barrack-rooms, but he rejected all overtures till he met O'Reilly, when he turned round and went back to dine with him and his comrades.

He searched Leonard's room once more, and not finding him, he refused to make his home with the Barrack Master; possibly because he could not make up his mind to have a home at all till he could have one with Leonard.

Half-a-dozen of Leonard's officer friends would willingly have adopted him, but he would not own another master. Then military dogs are apt to attach themselves exclusively either to commissioned or to non-commissioned soldiers, and The Sweep cast in his lot with the men, and slept on old coats in corners of barrack-rooms, and bided his time. Dogs' masters do get called away suddenly and *come back again.* The Sweep had his hopes, and did not commit himself.

Even if, at length, he realized that Leonard had passed beyond this life's outposts, it roused in him no instincts to return to the Hall. With a somewhat sublime contempt for those shreds of poor mortality laid to rest in the family vault, he elected to live where his little master had been happiest — in Asholt Camp.

Now and then he became excited. It was when a fresh regiment marched in. On these occasions he invariably made so exhaustive an examination of the regiment and its baggage, as led to his being more

or less forcibly adopted by half-a-dozen good-natured soldiers who had had to leave their previous pets behind them. But when he found that Leonard had not returned with that detachment, he shook off everybody and went back to O'Reilly.

When O'Reilly married, he took The Sweep to the Lodge, who thereupon instituted a search about the house and grounds; but it was evident that he had not expected any good results, and when he did not find Leonard he went away quickly down the old Elm Avenue. As he passed along the dusty road that led to Camp for the last time, he looked back now and again with sad eyes to see if O'Reilly was not coming too. Then he returned to the Barrack Room, where he was greeted with uproarious welcome, and eventually presented with a new collar by subscription. And so, rising with gun-fire and resting with "lights out," he lived and died a soldier's Dog.

. . . . . .

The new heir thrives at the Hall. He has brothers and sisters to complete the natural happiness of his home, he has good health, good parents, and is having a good education. He will have a goodly heritage. He is developing nearly as vigorous a fancy for soldiers as Leonard had, and drills his brothers and sisters with the help of O'Reilly. If he wishes to make arms his profession he will not be thwarted, for the Master of the House has decided that it is in many respects a desirable and wholesome career for an eldest son. Lady Jane may yet have to buckle on a hero's

sword. Brought up by such a mother in the fear of God, he ought to be good, he may live to be great, it's odds if he cannot be happy. But never, not in the "one crowded hour of glorious" victory, not in years of the softest comforts of a peaceful home, by no virtues and in no success shall he bear more fitly than his crippled brother bore the ancient motto of their house:

"Lætus Sorte Mea."

THE END.

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